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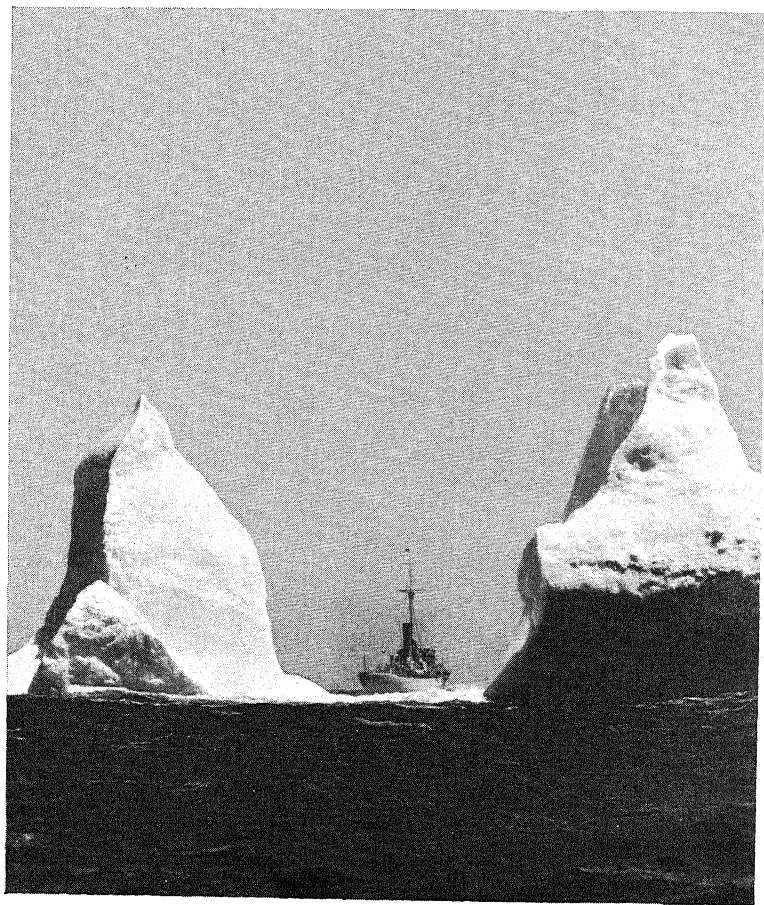
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D. N. PRAKASH, *Sqn.-Leader,*
Dy. Military Secy. to the Governor-General.

THIS IS THE LIFE!



AN AMERICAN COAST GUARD CUTTER ON THE INTERNATIONAL
ICE PATROL

THIS IS THE LIFE!

by

AUBREY WISBERG

and

HAROLD WATERS C.G.M. U.S.C.G.

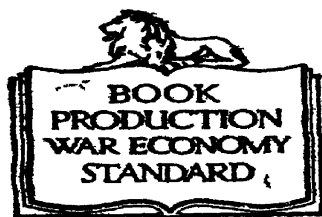
WITH FIVE ILLUSTRATIONS IN HALF-TONE



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Illustrations

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Note

WITH THE EXCEPTION OF A FEW WELL-known vessels such as the *Mauretania* and the *Titanic*, the liners referred to in this book are indicated by entirely fictitious names.

One

STIFF AND SHEER LEAPED THE CLIFFS OF NOVA SCOTIA from their grim skirt of surf-sprayed rocks in the pallid dawn.

Each bleak comber rolling shoreward in chill fury sucked added vigour the nearer it achieved disintegration. With futile extravagance it hurled itself on the rocky barrier, churning and boiling in a milky chaos of leaping pellets of liquid ice. Then, violence fading, it withdrew to renew its strength, hissing promise of further assault.

Grey and unpromising as the land appeared to the eager eyes of the eighty of us comprising the complement of the United States Coast Guard Cutter *Mohican*, bound into port after fifteen days of duty out on the International Ice Patrol, we absorbed warmth and cheer from anticipation. And, as if to tell us expectation was not to be disappointed, Chebucto Light winked dim but comforting assurance off our port bow.

Day grew. Inland we could detect the faint outline of the white-carpeted hills still shrouded with the snows of winter. Ahead of us stretched an in-port period of ten days, welcome relief from the early spring gales behind us which had buffeted and pounded us off Newfoundland and its Grand Banks.

Surfboat Joe—the *Mohican*'s Chief Gunner's Mate, Josephson—had much to say of Halifax and its hospitality. Grown grey and heavy during his twenty-nine years' service in the Coast Guard, Joe brought an undiminished appetite ashore with him every time we reached port. He showed no reluctance to dwell at length and in detail upon his miraculously sustained virility, his enormous success with the ladies, and his other enviable natural endowments to all who would lend an ear. Next to his own desirable gifts as a topic of conversation Joe liked to eulogize the attractions of Nova Scotia's leading seaport.

"The hottest dames . . . the best restaurants . . . the finest cafés . . . the strongest booze . . . the hottest dames . . . the

friendliest people . . . the hottest dames . . . the freshest climate . . . the hottest dames. . . .”

Joe’s inspired monologue rambled merrily on. Eager, salt-crusted ears found no surfeit.

On the whole, however, we were inclined to discount these marvellous allegations of perennial and increasing robustness with the passing years which our venerable Chief Gunner’s Mate insisted was his outstanding physical characteristic.

“The old cannoneer’s long past his prime,” affectionately scoffed my friend and shipmate of long standing, red-haired, giant Ginger Kane, after once listening to Joe’s phenomenal account of an evening’s joust with a willing waitress which had put to defiance every conceivable biological limitation. “One good night’s drift with a lively jane an’ he’d be a stretcher-case!”

But Joe could certainly tell a gusty romance.

We passed through the outer approaches to Halifax’s splendid land-locked harbour and nosed our way upstream towards the wharf of the Western Union Cable Company, where a berth awaited us.

Back on the *Mobican*’s quarterdeck a twenty-one-gun salute thundered from our rapid-fire six-pounders, breaking the morning’s sabbatical tranquillity, frightening the gulls into panic-stricken wheelings high in the sky. On the heights of the Citadel, that ancient fortress which frowns down upon Halifax, gunners of the Royal Canadian Artillery Garrison crashed out their acknowledgment of our booming respects, gun for gun. International courtesies having been exchanged with a friendly and neighbouring nation, we took our stations to moor ship, and by nine o’clock were tied up to our dock.

A little later in the day we should receive a month’s pay, after which liberty and a release from the irksome confinement of days aboard ship.

Our excitement at the imminence of shore-leave had to be suppressed while the pharmacist’s mate, in the absence of the cutter’s surgeon, nursing a severe case of tonsillitis in his bunk, impressed us with his medical knowledge by engaging in a long-winded discourse upon the dangers of venereal contamination,

which he pessimistically assumed lay in wait beneath every skirt.

For a full thirty minutes Iodine Mike, small, narrow-shouldered, dour, croaked on about the perils of promiscuous relations. He produced charts which displayed the horrific ravages of infection in blood-curdling hues. He dwelled upon the laborious cure involved. He touched upon the disturbing fact that our pay would automatically cease upon our admission to hospital, and wound up the lecture by coaching us in the use of the best-known prophylactics.

We went ashore.

Smartly outfitted in dress-blues, it did not take Kane, myself, and another shipmate named Nelander, a tall Dane better known to us as Beachcomber, from ferreting out a congenial café in Hollis Street presided over by slant-eyed sons and daughters of old Cathay. Inside we found others of the *Mobican's* crew already gathered and wading through a choice assortment of chops and steaks.

Half-way through our own gastronomical exploits the sound of the restaurant door being vigorously kicked open by a heavy boot drew our attention. It was the *Mobican's* elderly romantic, Surfboat Joe, with a pretty girl on each arm.

Nelander laughed. "Well, I'll be damned! Who says the old boy ain't a fast worker? We haven't been ashore an hour yet, an' look at him!"

"Nothing slow about old Joe," I remarked. "But remember—he's no stranger to Halifax. He's been here before."

"The girls were probably hungry," grunted Kane. "That's all they want out of him."

We wiped our dishes clean.

"Wonder if Joe knows where we can get a drink?" Nelander mused. "I could stand a few snorts after this feed. What say?"

"Ask him, Paul," Kane urged me.

I crossed to the discreetly curtained booth harbouring Joe and his two companions.

"Sit down, Bart," he invited me pompously. "Take a drink. Have a cigar."

He waved a pint bottle of whisky, but it was only one-third full. I did not wish to deprive him of it.

"Thanks," I said. "But we need more than that. Where can we get it?"

Joe readily supplied the desired information.

"Try Sticks' Place, down on lower Barrington Street. He's a one-legged ex-soldier. Runs a blind-pig and sells just about anythin' a feller needs. Tell him I sent you. Here—I'll write down the address for you." He ripped a menu apart with his calloused hands, scrawled the address with a thick, stubby pencil, and sent me on my way with the assurance of a good time. "I'll be down there later myself."

A tram-car took us to our destination. A one-legged man opened the door of the back room of the modest café to which we had been directed by a slovenly waiter when we told him we desired the whereabouts of Sticks. A shrewd pair of eyes appraised us carefully through the chink of the door.

"Surfboat Joe sent us," said the lanky Nelander. The portals were immediately swung wide and closed behind us. The mere mention of that magic sesame, Surfboat Joe's name, had stilled the fears the blind-pig's proprietor had of inquisitive revenue officers in that era of Prohibition.

A bar stretched along one wall of the large room. There were tables, a few booths. The place was full of uniformed men, soldiers of the Halifax garrison, Marines and bluejackets from a cruiser of the Royal Navy, and even a few of our own crowd from the *Mohican*.

A meagre orchestra of two violins and a broken concertina played by three Newfoundland fishermen provided music for the heavy, clumping dancing of soldiers and sailors with a choice collection of Halifax drabs. Waiters bustled round with drinks.

"Looks like we hit the right spot," Kane approved.

Sticks, the proprietor, so called because of the crutches he was obliged to use from the loss of a leg at Vimy Ridge a few years before, joined us at our table and treated us to a round of Jamaica rum. It was a drink that seared in one scorching blast all the way from tonsils to entrails.

How was business? Pretty good. He was getting a heavy patronage from the armed forces in and around Halifax who preferred dealing with an ex-soldier. He had served with a good few of them during the War.

A chanting, rhythmic chorus of request began in a group of soldiers drinking at the bar and spread in quick contagion throughout the room.

“We want Marie!
We want Marie!
We want Marie!
We want Marie!”

Hand-clapping and a resolute stamping of feet, banging of beer and whisky glasses, whistles and calls, added indisputable proof that the chief and immediate requirement of the assemblage was “Marie!”

“What’s the noise about?” Kane asked wonderingly.

“They’re trying to get Eskimo Marie out of that booth over there to sing for ’em,” said Sticks. “She’s busy entertaining a sergeant of Royal Marines, but she’ll be along in a minute. Marie never disappoints the boys.”

When the clamour threatened to inform all Halifax that the gay conviviality of Sticks’ Place would not be complete until Marie added her charm and talents, that lady graciously responded to the vociferation of her admiring public.

She pulled back the curtain of the booth and showed herself, much to the glaring resentment of the sergeant of Royal Marines who had been privately enjoying her company.

Eskimo Marie was very pretty. She may have been a bit too buxom from an over-fondness for beer, perhaps, but, taken all in all, or for that matter piece by piece, she was a girl with attractions potent enough to kick any simple sailorman’s heart into an accelerated beat.

“What’ll it be, boys?” she asked, taking her place in front of the sketchy orchestra. Her hair was raven black, her eyes dark and sparkling, her skin a soft, smooth, warm light brown.

“*Madelon!* Let’s have *Madelon!*” the requests rang out.

THIS IS THE LIFE!

The musicians struck up the old French marching song, a tune vividly recalled by many of Marie's admirers. The girl's husky contralto wooed the music. Lustily the entranced audience joined in the chorus. The very rafters quivered to the surge of mighty *Madelon*.

"By God!" murmured the smitten Nelander, who could not keep his blue eyes away from Marie's dark ones. "What a good-looker she is! Can't remember when I've seen a better one. What she doin' here?"

"Works for me," Sticks said succinctly, with the impresario's pride in a stellar attraction. "Sings and plays hostess. Want to meet her?" he asked generously.

"Do I?" Nelander sighed blissfully. "Just introduce me, will you?"

"After this number," Sticks promised, rubbing a soothing hand over his aching leg-stump. "That is, if her Marine boyfriend don't object."

"Why is she called Eskimo Marie?" I inquired. "Surely she isn't an Eskimo?"

"Half-breed," said Sticks. "Her father was a Mountie—her mother a full-blooded Eskimo woman from a tribe up on Ellesmere Land. They were never married, of course. Her old man just happened to be spending a couple of winters up there on police business. A missionary took some interest in Marie later. She was a pretty kid. He sent her down to a convent in Montreal. She's been around Halifax for a year now."

Kane, whose interest in women in the past had never seemed to be more than a casual one, also appeared impressed. "I wouldn't mind meetin' her myself," he murmured to me.

Sticks had a little difficulty in effecting the introduction for the eager Nelander. Marie was engulfed by a milling crowd of the applauders clamouring for encores. He finally managed to extract her and manœuvred her over to our table. We pressed a drink on her.

"I can't stay long," she smiled. "Got company to-night. My boy-friend will be wondering where I am."

"How about a dance?" asked Nelander.

"Later, perhaps. I've got the next one with Sergeant Hawkins."

Nelander was about to dismiss Sergeant Hawkins with a terse but eloquent epithet when that individual intruded belligerently on our friendly little gathering.

"Strike me flamin' pink!" came his heraldic bellow of indignation. "Leave it to bloomin' matloes to try an' sneak a bloke's tart away from 'im."

"Don't lose your bloody head, Sarge," Kane advised soothingly. "Sit down and have a drink with us. We're not tryin' to steal your girl."

The sergeant scowled uncompromisingly. "Not 'arf you ain't! Come on, Marie. Let's dance."

"See you later, boys. Thanks for the drink," said Marie, as she went on to the floor with the glowering sergeant.

"I'll be around for the next one," Nelander called after her.

"Aw, lay off!" growled Kane. "That leatherneck's liable to get nasty. There's no bloody sense gettin' mixed up in a riot over a dame even if she is a good-looker. An', anyway," he added, his sense of justice asserting itself, "the Marine had her first, an' there's plenty of other skirts we can dance with."

"It beats me to think a jane like her should be wastin' her time with a goddam Marine," declared Nelander, shaking his head sorrowfully.

"First come first served. Anyway, there's nothin' you can do about it."

"I'm not so sure," said Nelander slowly. He eyed Kane inquiringly. "But I'll need some help."

"What kind of help?"

"Invite Hawkins over to our table while I'm dancin' an' prime him full of booze. I'll foot the bill."

Kane spat thinly between his teeth and sneered scornfully. "He won't fall for that old one. An' besides he's carryin' a load now."

"Nothin' risk nothin' gain," Nelander returned, with stunning logic.

Kane could think of no reply at the minute likely to adulterate that felling argument and so was compelled to agree rather churlishly.

"Righto. We'll give it a fling."

Sergeant Hawkins was quite ready to partake of our hospitality while Nelander trundled Marie over the floor. Waxing eloquent and increasingly alcoholic, he told us that his ship was the *Antelope*, just out of England and now anchored in the harbour. In another month they were to sail for New Zealand on a three-year tour of duty on that station.

"Y'know," he confided, with a conspiratorial wink. "I've asked Marie to marry me. I think she'd make a bloke a good wife."

"How long have you known her?" I asked.

"Two weeks. Seems like longer. Her last name is Wilson."

Nelander and his partner failed to return to our table when the dance came to an end, a neglect which disturbed Sergeant Hawkins considerably.

"Wonder wot could 'ave 'appened to 'em?" he frowned. "If that there bloke thinks 'e's goin' to diddle me with m' girl 'e's got another bloody think comin'!"

"They'll be back," Kane assured him. "Here—have another drink."

Sergeant Hawkins accepted the invitation, but was not deterred from announcing pugnaciously, "I'm goin' to look for 'em. If that pal o' yours is hup to any fancy tricks I'll jolly well punch 'is bloomin' nose through 'is blinkin' 'ead. Take it from me I will!"

"Let's find that dizzy beachcomber," Kane suggested to me, *sotto voce*, "otherwise somethin's liable to happen around here."

An examination of the surrounding booths failed to unearth the errant couple. Upstairs, we were finally informed, were some private rooms for the more affluent of Sticks' patrons. In one of them we found Surfboat Joe entertaining his two lady companions of the evening's earlier hours.

"Seen anything of the beachcomber?" we inquired in chorus, while Sergeant Hawkins breathed redolent fury over my shoulder.

Joe gestured with a disengaged hand to an adjoining room. "In there. Got a pretty piece o' goods with him, too."

Sergeant Hawkins wobbled towards the room, thrust the door open dramatically, and gave vent to a roar of rage.

"What's goin' on 'ere? Come on, talk hup—what's goin' on 'ere?"

He might more appropriately have inquired what was coming off, for a lovely feminine thigh, revealingly girdled with a dainty blue slip, whisked behind a screen which concealed a small wash-basin. Nelander, with his jumper off exposing his full chest, slowly rose from a chair to confront the face-purpling sergeant.

"I'll teach you to diddle me!" promised the latter wrathfully. "I'll give you a clip wot'll make a man outa you!"

"Marie seems to know a nicer way," Kane grinned, thereby stimulating the colour of Sergeant Hawkins' incipient apoplexy.

"What's all this?" demanded Surfboat Joe, entering the scene of imminent conflict, attracted by the loud voices. A glance told his expert eyes where the trouble lay.

"Now I'm older than both of you," he said placatingly, "an' I'm your senior, Nelander. I'm not goin' to stand for a brawl up here. I like this place, an' I don't want the police raidin' it. You fellers have got to be reasonable about this."

"Just lemme get at him!" entreated Sergeant Hawkins. "I'll knock some bloomin' reason into 'im, I will!"

"Like hell you will!" scowled Nelander, nettled by the threat and taking a threatening step forward.

"You can settle this without startin' a rough-house!" cut in Surfboat Joe insistently.

"I'm not cuttin' cards or flippin' a coin, if that's wot you bleedin' well means," growled the suspicious Sergeant Hawkins. "She's my girl in the first place. I got the right to take her home."

"I got a better idea," Joe declared. "A scheme that will include everybody here. We can settle this in a man's way."

"Wot you mean—'we'?" demanded the outraged sergeant.

"Me," said Joe innocently. "I'm in this, too."

"Wot you stickin' your hugly mug into this for?" Sergeant Hawkins wanted to know truculently.

"Well," said Joe, blinking at the vigour with which his right was being questioned, "I'm here, ain't I?"

The sergeant could not deny that irrefutable fact. He pondered it a moment, then growled, "Well, wot's the grand idea? Let's 'ear it."

"It'll be a' elimination contest," said Joe. "And," he declared magnanimously, "the expense will be on me."

"What expense?" asked Nelander.

"For the drinks."

"Drinks?" echoed the bibulous sergeant, pricking up his ears.

"I'll order all the rum you can drink, an' the one who's on his feet last can take the girl home. How about it?"

"It's the best way out," Eskimo Marie approved, now appearing from behind the screen in a more conventional mode of dress.

"A man's way," concurred the sergeant, with a sage nod.

It was a contest in which I did not make a very creditable showing. Kane and Nelander's capacity for liquor I well knew exceeded mine. Whether Sergeant Hawkins' was equal or superior to his opponents was problematical. His nose suggested it might be. While the florid British Marine was not averse to the scheme advanced by the ingenious Surfboat Joe, he had quite a great objection to that gentleman including himself in the contest. Joe finally was forced to participate only as referee. The beachcomber was none too pleased with the whole project, having promised himself quicker excitement than toping. But, with the rest of us agreeable to the suggestion, he did not have the courage to proclaim unalterable independence.

So, like gallant knights of old, substituting whisky glasses for lances on the tournament field in a struggle to the death for favour of beauteous lady, we sat ourselves down at the table and awaited Joe's signal. Sticks brought in four bottles of Jamaica rum and then left, closing the door. With Eskimo Marie an interested spectator behind him, and flanked by the other two ladies of his earlier acquaintance, Joe measured out the drinks.

How long the struggle lasted I do not know. Hours later I awoke to find myself lying on the floor of an unheated room, a revolting taste in my mouth, and with a head spinning like a dervish. Alongside me lay two quiet forms, other victims of the night's strange conflict—Sergeant Hawkins and Nelander.

The door opened, and a blade of light stabbed my eyes. Through it hobbled Sticks carrying a small tray on which rested three steaming mugs of coffee.

"Pour this into you," he chuckled. "That big boy with you sure floored you under the table. I put you three in here for the night. It's the morgue."

"Morgue?" I groaned.

"I call it that. Place where I stow the passed-out drunks."

It required the combined efforts of Sticks and myself to revive the other two vanquished gladiators. After brushing our dishevelled uniforms and downing our coffee we walked blearily into the street to find a small blizzard in progress.

The enmity between Nelander and Sergeant Hawkins seemed to be a thing of the past. Such antagonism as they had once felt had fused to a common one directed at Kane.

"I didn't think he'd pull a stunt like that," Nelander grouched, huddling his shoulders against the snow. "He should have kept out of it. I could have drunk you and the leatherneck under the table."

"You started the trouble," I pointed out. "So be a sport."

Memory of Marie's snatched charms rankled within him, and he flared angrily. "Like hell I will! Kane's a double-crosser, an' he's goin' to answer to me for last night's work."

I said nothing, and we tramped along silently. At one of the street-corners we lost Sergeant Hawkins and soon found ourselves aboard the *Mohican* some half-hour before the expiration of our liberty, which had an eight o'clock in the morning deadline.

The quarterdeck was deserted. The quartermaster who should have been at the gangway to check off our names on the liberty list was below on some errand. We should have to await his return. While we stood glumly in the falling snow Kane ambled cheerfully aboard, his face wreathed in a wide grin, his flat-hat in his hands, his fine, wild thatch of ungovernable red hair powdered with snow.

"A hell of a shipmate you turned out to be!" snarled Nelander.

"Where'd you learn to drink?" Kane chuckled.

"You big rat, for two pins I'd——" Nelander made a threatening gesture with his fist.

"Take it easy, Beach," I advised. "All's fair in love and war, and Ginger won fairly. No use falling out over a girl."

"You keep outa this," he growled. "I could have taken care of that Limey leatherneck."

"Yes, and got us all pinched."

"Come off it," Kane urged amiably.

"I'll teach you to keep your nose outa my business from now on," stated the truculent Nelander, whirling on Kane. He must have been harder hit by the charms of Eskimo Marie than I had suspected. "Put up your hands."

Kane struggled out of his pea-jacket. "Well, all right," he said obligingly. "Let's go!"

The struggle was a short one up on the deserted deck and in the quietly falling snow. Both combatants were big men, both over six feet, but Kane had the advantage of a year or two of professional pugilism. Nelander hit the deck from the impact of a right cross.

"Had enough?" Kane asked casually.

The Dane struggled to his feet, lurched against a fire-rack, and wrenched out a brass fire-nozzle.

"Drop it, Beach!" I shouted.

Kane made a hasty retreat before the burnished gleam of that murderous weapon brandished in Nelander's tempestuous grasp. The latter's arm shot forward. The fire-nozzle sang through the air. It missed its target by a narrow margin and dropped over the side.

Piqued at such tactics, Kane returned to the battle. Nelander fell back rapidly before the hurricane of telling blows. Backed up against the semicircular length of chain stretched above the fan-tail, the bleeding Dane tried to ward off the chopping punishment so expertly delivered. A blow in the stomach winded him. He doubled over. A right uppercut straightened him out, knocked him backward. The chain behind him sagged under his weight, and he toppled overboard.

Kane tore out of his jumper and threw it to me.

"I'm goin' after him! That lousy swine couldn't swim in a mud-puddle!"

A second splash told me he had struck the water.

I raced forward for a lifebelt, pulled it from its hook, and threw it over the side. Visibility, due to the falling snow, was slight, but I could see that Kane had hold of Nelander and was trying to reach the lifebelt floating away on the swift current.

When I returned to the side with a heaving line both figures had disappeared, swallowed by the snow—or water. It had all happened with a dramatic swiftness which left me thunderstruck. Not five minutes had elapsed from the time Kane's massive fist first smashed into Nelander's face. No one else witnessed the struggle.

Racing forward again, I pressed the general alarm button, and yelled at the top of my voice, "MAN OVERBOARD!" repeating the cry down the hatch leading to the berth-deck.

Men swarmed quickly up to the quarterdeck. A lifeboat crew was hastily assembled and took their seats in the boat. The falls were manned, and the boat lowered in the water to disappear in the snow in the direction I had panted out to its coxswain.

Shortly after a second boat was lowered away to join the search.

The *Mobican's* captain, Clark, had me up for questioning when he learned I was the only witness as to what had occurred.

"What happened, Bart? How did those two men come to fall overboard?"

I decided on a lie. Time enough to tell the truth, as it would have to be told, if Kane and Nelander were not found.

"We were returning from liberty, sir. Nelander slipped and fell while crossing the gangway. Kane dived after him."

Our commander eyed me dubiously, boring into me with his eyes set deep in his weather-beaten face.

"You've been drinking, eh? Had the other two been drinking also?"

"Yes, sir. We had a few drops together last night."

"From an eye-dropper, I suppose?" the captain remarked.

"Are you sure Kane and Nelander were not drunk?"

"No drunker than I am at this moment, sir."

"You don't look any too sober. Go below and get cleaned up. I'll talk to you later about this."

The boats returned after a two-hour search of the snow-hissing water. Kane and the beachcomber were still missing. The water was freezing. Even if my friend had succeeded in retaining his grip on the embattled Nelander, exposure must have caught them. In a day or two we should probably find their bodies washed up along the shores of Halifax harbour. And the Coast Guard career of Edward "Ginger" Kane, so recently begun after his arrival from Australia as able-bodied seaman on the windjammer *William Lewis*, would have come to a dramatic but tragic end.

And all over a pretty, dark-skinned woman known as Eskimo Marie.

Two

EIGHT BELLS CLOCKED NOON MUFFLED BY THE HEAVY shroud of fog which had displaced the snow. All aboard the *Mohican* had given Kane and Nelander up for lost. The cold dreariness of the Halifax day sat upon us like a damp, evil conscience. We spoke to each other in subdued voices as if conscious of a brooding menace always beside us.

Coupled with my own keen personal distress at the loss of a shipmate in whose company I had come from the other side of the world and with whom I had experienced many adventures was the disturbing consideration that a formal board of investigation delving into the circumstances of the tragedy would reveal my own liberties with the truth in the earlier story I had given our commander.

"Don't worry about it too much," advised Donovan, a man of some mystery to the rest of us aboard ship, a quiet, unassuming, grave, and deliberate personality to whom I confided my dilemma. "There's still a chance they may be found. And, then, it wasn't your fault it happened."

We were walking about the wet deck, my troubled thoughts

seeking relief in activity. A blanketing pall of silence had descended upon the fog-obscured harbour punctuated only by the muffled bells of anchored vessels beating out their fog signals.

"I would suggest, however," said Donovan quietly, "that you tell the truth at the inquiry this time. Otherwise it might go hard with you at such time as the true facts finally get out. It might mean a stretch in some naval prison for perjury."

"*Mobican* АНОУ!" Up from the fog, struggling for life in the filmy grasp of its strangling tentacles, the cry seeped to our ears, a disembodied voice haunting impenetrable infinity. We peered into the murk and soon made out the shape of a long grey motor-boat, on the stern of which, as she approached, we were able to read the name *Antelope*.

"Must be a liberty boat from that British cruiser anchored out in the stream," I remarked.

"On an official call," Donovan hazarded.

"Throw them a line, you two!" shouted the quartermaster, joining us. "Lower them a Jacob's ladder!"

Down in the boat alongside I recognized one of the faces. It was the cherry face of our drinking companion of the night before, Sergeant Hawkins. Being the senior man in his boat, he climbed aboard us as soon as we lowered the Jacob's ladder to him. The officer of the deck who should have been there to receive him was below at his lunch. I took advantage of the respite afforded by the few minutes necessary to get him on deck to inform the sergeant of the sad fate which had overtaken Kane and Nelander.

"Don't worry about them blokes," he said, with a chuckle.

There was true British phlegm and indifference! I was about to express my feelings hotly on his lack of common human sympathy, if not for the loss of two members of the Ice Patrol, at least for talented drinking companions, but he forestalled me with another enigmatic remark:

"Lucky blighters, them chaps!"

"Lucky?" I echoed in consternation, thinking of the watery death which had engulfed them.

"Yuss. Strike me bloody pink if they ain't!" said Sergeant Hawkins.

The officer of the deck hurried up, wiping his mouth on his handkerchief. The visiting sergeant leaped to attention, clicked his heels together, executed a snappy salute, and droned in a flat, level voice obviously stored away and used only for official communications:

"Commandin' horfficer 'is Majesty's ship *Hantelope* sends 'is compliments to Commandin' horfficer United States Coast Guard Cutter *Mo'ican*, an' begs to report that 'e 'as two of your men haboard the *Hantelope*. We picked 'em up about four hours ago. They was 'angin' honto a lifebelt, an' drifted right by our ship. They was promptly 'auled haboard an' put down below in sick-bay. General condition of men at the present time good, but both sufferin' from hexposure. Sergeant 'Erbert 'Awkins reportin', sir!"

Kane and Nelander alive! The news spread through the ship like wildfire. Men came tumbling up on deck to press the flattered Sergeant Hawkins for more information. When I could get close to him for a moment myself I hurriedly told him under what impression our commanding officer lay regarding the incident and asked him to coach Kane and Nelander in identical stories upon his return to the *Antelope*.

"Don't worry," Hawkins assured me. "Mum's the bloomin' word! But, by cripes," he asked, with sincere academic interest, "where did that red-haired bloke learn to booze?"

Later in the day the two men snatched from the freezing maw of the harbour were returned to us.

"We were pretty far gone," admitted Kane over a mug of steaming coffee. "That cold water hit me like a fist in the belly. If that Limey cruiser hadn't loomed up when she did the current would've carried us out to sea. In another ten minutes——" He shrugged his massive shoulders. It was a story he was willing to leave untold.

The following morning brought both agreeable and disagreeable repercussions.

"Kane," said Captain Clark, when he, myself, and Nelander

were lined up before him in his cabin at his order, "you did a fine piece of work in saving Nelander from drowning yesterday. For your brave deed you may expect appropriate recognition in due time. I am glad to see that neither you nor Nelander suffered any ill effects from exposure. You, Nelander, are very fortunate. I suggest you exercise more caution from now on when crossing the gangplank with a full cargo aboard. And you, Bart," he concluded, throwing a few scraps of commendation at me, "showed great presence of mind in throwing that lifebelt overboard as promptly as you did. You may go."

Nelander had a few words for Kane when we found ourselves on deck again.

"I owe my life to you," he acknowledged readily, "but I still think you're a louse for double-crossing me with Eskimo Marie. You licked me this mornin', but I'm goin' to have another crack at you one of these days."

"Aw, come on, give us your fist!" Kane urged amicably, extending his hand in proffered friendship. "To-night we'll have a couple of drinks and forget about it."

Nelander agreed on one condition.

"You lay off Marie, then."

"You've only laid eyes on her once," Kane pointed out impatiently. "She's just as much mine as yours. Besides, I like her. She's a good sport. Hell, no—I'm not goin' to lay off just because you don't want any competition. You just take your chances."

"Well," said Nelander, with quiet menace, "I'll be seein' you." He walked away forward.

"What the hell has got into that bird?" Kane wondered audibly. "I never thought he'd turn out to be such a sorehead. I should've let the silly stiff drown!"

Even more surprising to me than Nelander's attachment to the half-breed siren of Sticks' Place was Kane's apparent infatuation. My other mates of the port-watch considered the circumstance as the inevitable magnetism of the 'right dame' in a man's life. But to me, who had known Kane through the years and under many romantic vicissitudes, it was somewhat bewildering.

So engrossed was he in Eskimo Marie that when the ship's crew was invited to a dance at the Navy League, with the prospect of meeting new girls of another type than the questionable environments of Barrington, Hollis, and Water Streets offered, neither Kane nor the beachcomber accepted.

"We're all invited," announced my informant, Bolton, the *Mobican's* chubby-faced Bugler. "There'll be plenty of dames on tap."

"I'm broke," I said.

"Ain't we all?"

"Then what's the use of dating up a girl and not having the price to treat her to a meal or——"

"The dames you meet at the Navy League are not the dating kind," said Bolton. "They're not at all like the bats we've been flying around with for the past week down on Water Street. They've been strained."

"Strained?"

"Pasteurized. They've got to be approved by the hostess of the Navy League. Many of 'em come from some of the town's best families."

"I wouldn't feel comfortable without a dollar in my pocket."

"Let's borrow five bucks from Captain Milton?" the Bugler suggested.

Rare was the man on the *Mobican* who had not run through his month's pay in the first week spent in Halifax. In another three days we should be off to sea again. It seemed a rash defiance to a seagoing man's destiny to permit our shore period to end on the flat note of respectable monotony when it had begun on the high climax of anticipation and realization. We applied ourselves to the one recourse open to us in such an emergency. A five-dollar loan from the *Mobican's* Shylock would cost us seven on the following pay-day, an outrageous interest exploiting the need of the borrowers.

Captain Milton showed no reluctance to loan us five dollars apiece.

"Don't forget to see me on pay-day," he reminded us, pulling a large roll of bills from an inner pocket of his jumper.

Milton, like Kane, Nelander, Donovan, Bolton, and myself, was a seaman. His only claim to the august title of Captain with which we dignified him sprang from his duties aboard ship. His full title was Captain-of-the-Head, a menial job calling for the cleaning of lavatories and washrooms, head being the nautical euphemism.

Our Captain-of-the-Head was barely literate and could just about sign his name. The crew of the *Mobican*, or, rather, that portion embittered by indebtedness to this grasping financial octopus, maintained that his shore occupation had been similar to the environment he haunted aboard ship, and that such limited cultural advancement as he had attained had resulted from the studious perusal of those forthright literary compositions scrawled with such extreme candour on the walls of rooms of public necessity. This assumption, of course, might have been the exaggeration of bias. Certain it is, however, that, for all the necessity which existed for one of Captain Milton's talents aboard, he was not a very popular man.

Yet when it came to arithmetic, for all his failings in other branches of learning, Milton was a wizard. His inexorable terms were 40 per cent. per month. During the course of that period he would loan out on the average five hundred dollars to his shipmates. He was by far the wealthiest man aboard, not excluding the officers, and owned a small boarding-house in New York. All these material possessions, however, only seemed to inculcate greed for more. He was miserly in all his habits, neither drank, smoked, nor consorted with women. Seldom at all did he go ashore. Though Coast Guard regulations forbade the practice of moneylending, Captain Milton's clients numbered practically every man on the ship.

And so we added ourselves to his list of debtors. The dance at the Navy League was only significant to me for that result.

Our numerous visits to Sticks' Place had made for us the acquaintance of numerous of the personnel of the Royal Canadian Regiment, a body of men which garrisoned the Citadel. On more than one occasion our khaki-clad friends had dropped the

interesting information that they had a wet canteen in their barracks and would consider themselves honoured if we let them play host to us.

"Let's drop in on them this afternoon," I suggested. "We don't have to stay long. Just for a few beers and then we can buzz off. We've promised them so many times we'd come." Kane, Donovan, and Bolton were agreeable, so on that dreary Sunday afternoon, the last Sunday left of our shore period before a return to sea, the four of us trudged up George Street and climbed the steep hill which led to the ancient fortress on the summit.

The Citadel, a massive star-shaped fortification dominating the hill, dates back to Nova Scotia's early colonial days. Once upon a time its cannon, now hopelessly outdated, had boomed in staunch protection of the little settlement at its base. But its days of military significance had long since departed. Its armaments had deteriorated into historical curios in comparison with the formidable long-range guns of its sister forts in Halifax harbour—York Redoubt, Connaught, and Sandwich. It appeared that the Citadel's garrison was there for singularly unmilitaristic sentimental reasons—a breathing, living monument to its dead past.

"Halt! Who goes there?" came a sentry's brisk challenge.

"Friends of the Royal Canadian Regiment," we returned.

"Advance, friends, and be recognized!"

Crossing over the lowered drawbridge of the moat which encircles the fort, we halted in front of the sentry-box.

"You'll have to wait here a few minutes until the Sergeant of the Guard shows up," the sentry told us apologetically. "They're holding a pack-drill for defaulters this afternoon, and he may not let you through."

"Pass 'em through!" directed a new voice, and the sergeant of the guard emerged like some brawny ghost of the fog. He was a Scotsman, McDougal by name, an old friend of Sticks' Place and a redoubtable companion in the warming art of guzzle. "I'll guide ye to the barracks mesel'," he said. "Otherwise ye may get roon down in this blatherin' fog. We're holdin'

pack-dreel for some of our backward laddies. Follow me an' stay close to the ramparts. When ye get in the barracks warm ye'sel' by the fire an' wait for us. We'll only be oot here anither half-hour."

From the parade ground we could hear the muffled beat of footsteps, the sounds of men being driven to and fro. As we skirted these vague shapes of discipline's torment we could hear their protesting cries.

"Cor, I'm fagged out, corporal!"

"These bloody straps are cutting my shoulders!"

"I'm all in, sergeant!"

And in return from the merciless N.C.O.'s, appointed overseers of the dreaded pack-drill, came tyrannical discouragement of complaint.

"Serve you bloody well right!"

"Double time there, you!"

It was a relief to find ourselves eventually in the cosy barracks, warmed by a series of iron stoves giving off a cheerful, ruddy glow.

"Ye moost have a wee bit of sup with us, laddies," invited Sergeant McDougal, after we had downed several rounds of beer, the only liquid on tap.

"But we only meant to drop in on you." Our polite protestations carried no weight with the hospitable Scotsman.

"Ye canna leave without a bit of sup," he insisted. In persuasion he added, "An' the Sergeant-Major has got a leetle entertainment planned."

The supper was good and wholesome even if somewhat roughly served. The beer was limitless. Our voices rose in loud and friendly talk. Our wit took on sharper sting. Laughter grew long and raucous.

"Let's have a song!" proposed a tipsy corporal.

"No musicians!" lamented a youthful private. "They're all on leave-pass except the three locked up in cells."

"Turn 'em out!" bellowed the sergeant-major at McDougal, overcome with beer, good food, conviviality, and a sense of hospitality due to guests.

"Turn 'em loose!" came McDougal's stentorian echo directed at the corporal.

"Turn 'em loose!" the latter blasted at the private.

"Are the prisoners always turned out on a festive occasion?" I asked the beer-redolent McDougal, torn between the imitation of a bagpipe band rendering a spirited *The Campbells are Coming* and diligent application to a frothing stein of beer.

"Depends on what mood the Sergeant-Major is in. When he's feelin' gude he turns 'em out. When he don't, he don't."

One of the released musicians struck up a popular hit of the day on a piano. The crowd roared into song. Between two numbers the loud, demanding bark of a dog was heard out on the now deserted parade ground.

Sergeant-Major Gibbons held up a huge hand for silence. The insistent barking came once more, louder this time.

"It's old Whisky, by George!" thundered Gibbons. "Let him in, McDougal!"

"Whisky?" I curiously inquired of the corporal at my side.

"Regimental—*hic*—mashcot. Ver' nice animal—charmin' beast—delightful personality. In'erduce you—'s' promise! Pass the beer!"

Some one opened the door, through which ambled one of the largest Newfoundland dogs I have ever seen. Jet black in colour, he had the proportions of a Shetland pony.

"Sing, Whisky—sing!" clamoured his friends.

Whisky was unresponsive except for the look of deep reproach which he seemed to be bending upon the assembled company. Having let his displeasure become manifest, he gave vent to several plaintive whines in which could be detected a faint suggestion of accusation, so it seemed to me.

"Can't like our company," Kane presumed.

"Ain't that," explained the corporal. "Whisky wants a drink. He won't sing until he gets a few past the blinkin' collar."

Anxious in some measure to return that hospitality which the entire regiment had lavished upon our party, Kane poured a saucerful of beer out for the dog and set it before his nose. Whisky sniffed disdainfully and turned contemptuously away.

"He only drinks whusky," said Sergeant McDougal. "Watch the Sergeant-Major," he directed, with a wink.

We watched with great interest. Sergeant-Major Gibbons fumbled for a bottle of whisky in the pocket of his great-coat hanging on the back of his chair and poured out a liberal allowance into a tin container. He held it up to Whisky's mouth. The dog lapped at it greedily, his great tongue slapping at his jowls like some old connoisseur smacking ecstatic lips over an exquisite concoction.

Now that he found himself on an equality with us, Whisky showed more congeniality. His canine baritone, displaying an impressive range, joined our next song. He had a definite feeling for music. His effort to carry the solo part of one of the more spirited airs from *The Barber of Seville*, with some change in the lyrics upon the part of the choristers of the Royal Canadian Regiment, earned for him the undying appreciation of all who had music in their souls and a plenitude of beer in their stomachs.

That Whisky's gait was becoming a trifle erratic was only to be expected in view of his generous libations.

Kane called my attention to the phenomenon. "The dog's gettin' blotto." Whisky's expression was definitely owlsh, his walk most uncertain.

"He's na full yet," observed Sergeant McDougal, "but he weel be by th' tame the evenin's over wi'."

"How much can he hold?" I asked.

"Aboot quart an' a half."

"Pretty expensive proposition keepin' him supplied with hooch," Kane surmised.

"Aye," McDougal sighed, "that it is."

Following the consumption of his third pint, Whisky began to display symptoms suggestive of 'the fancies,' as D.T.'s is known to our American element. What he saw, whether green griffons or rufous rhinoceri, one could not definitely say. But it must have been of magnetic appeal, for Whisky eyed space intently, the hair of his neck bristling, alcoholic gurgles of menace rumbling in his throat. Suddenly he leaped forward like a

released projectile, giving tongue to a wild symphony of yowls, growls, whines, and barkings which seriously encroached upon our own vocalizings.

Sergeant-Major Gibbons began to lose patience.

"Tell the Sergeant of the Guard to report to me!" he ordered.

Some minutes later that person stood stiffly at attention and presented himself.

"You sent for me, Sergeant-Major?"

His superior pointed a shaking finger at Whisky, now lying on his back waving his great paws in the air.

"Take him away! Put him in clink for the night. He's driving us—*hic*—daffy with his yodellings."

The command perturbed the Sergeant of the Guard.

"But he's full to the gills," he protested plaintively. "Why, he can't even walk. What am I going to do with him?" he asked helplessly, eyeing Whisky's huge, supine bulk askance.

"Gorblimey!" thundered and hiccuped Sergeant-Major Gibbons at his baffled junior. "You call yourself—a—*hic*!—a—*hic*!—*atchoo*!—soldier?" he demanded triumphantly, looking as pleased at having overcome the hazards of articulation as if he had successfully wrested the Citadel back from some advancing enemy host. "You're a hell of a bloke to be wearin' sergeant's stripes! Can't cope with a drunken dog! Where's your 'nish'tive—where's your 'maginashun—who's got the beer?—well—well——?" Sergeant-Major Gibbons rose to majestic heights of vilifying bombast. "Get him out of here, you loony, addlepated half-wit!"

"But there's nothing in the drill-book about removing a drunken dog," protested the Sergeant of the Guard feebly.

"By Gad, by George, drill-book be damned, you putty-faced lout!" roared Sergeant-Major Gibbons, having worked himself into a froth from which point I expected him to emulate Whisky and fall on his back wagging his paws in the air. "Get a bloomin' stretcher an' strap him on it! Put him in clink before I put you there!"

By the time a stretcher had been procured and two stretcher-bearers commandeered Whisky had passed to a blissful state of

unconsciousness. With the assistance of several members of the Royal Canadian Regiment and Kane's substantial aid, the canine drunkard was rolled on to the stretcher, and the detail departed with its load to the clink, where no doubt he would sleep it off as he had done on numerous previous occasions.

Drunk by this time, too, were the liberated musicians. They were escorted back to their cells to keep Whisky company.

Unsteady on our own feet, we left the gusty, robust confines of the barracks of the Royal Canadian Regiment on the historic Citadel brooding high and majestically over Halifax's roof-tops, and began the steep and precarious descent to our ship, passing through the fort's weather-beaten ramparts out into the cold and frosty night.

Three

ILL-LIT BY THE FITFUL GLOW OF ITS SPARSE STREET lights, and almost deserted as a result of the bitter, knife-like wind sweeping from the harbour, Water Street echoed to our unsteady footsteps as we returned to our ship.

And echoing despairingly in the biting night came the thin shriek of "Help!"

We stopped. Listened.

"Help!"

The cry came again. "Come on, boys!" boomed Kane, instantly responding to the plea. "Somebody's gettin' stuck up on the corner. Let's go!"

He lumbered off in the direction from which the faint call had come, and, true enough, we made out the vague, threshing forms of dark figures struggling in the distance. The first fingers of a pea-soup fog, spreading inland, rolled a thickening curtain over the scene.

"How much did you get?" a disembodied voice demanded.

"Ten bucks an' a Bible," was the hasty response.

"Gimme five of that ten—quick!" The sounds died away.

"Shall we chase them?" I asked, as we peered uncertainly through the growing mist.

"No," growled Kane. "They know the lay of the land better than we do. Let's look for the guy they slugged. He must be lyin' around here somewhere."

He was. Our search was brief. I stumbled over his form in the gutter, and he moaned feebly. We dragged him into the blur of the nearest street-lamp, and to our surprise saw that he was one of the crew of the *Mobican*.

"It's Preacher Mason!" I exclaimed.

"What the devil would he be doin' down on Water Street?" Kane wanted to know as he examined the little fellow's sadly battered face.

"There's a seamen's mission in this neighbourhood," I recalled. "He was probably returning from services down there. He's a pal of the Bible-spouting old sea captain who runs the place."

"We'd better get him to a doctor," said Donovan. "He looks as if he's having a hæmorrhage." Our efforts to stem the flow of blood from his obviously broken nose met with no success.

"Any quacks around here?" said Kane.

"The ship's not far away," I returned. "Only a few blocks. Maybe the Doctor's aboard. I can make it down there in a few minutes."

"Righto." Kane nodded. "If he isn't there bring a civilian doctor back with you."

I sprinted the short distance to the wharf where the *Mobican* was berthed and routed our Dr Wilcoxon from his state-room.

"Odd that anyone should wish to molest Preacher Mason," he mused as we hurried back to the scene of the gory encounter.

"It was robbery. Somebody slugged him for the few dollars he had in his pocket."

The doctor's examination of the unconscious sailor was short.

"Looks like concussion. We'll get an ambulance and take him to the hospital. H'm—pulse is okay. I guess he'll pull through, but we'll sail without him to-morrow." He shook his head sympathetically as he gazed at the wrecked, bleeding face. "Must've used brass knuckles on him."

The ambulance we had called deposited our unfortunate shipmate in the Victoria General Hospital, where he regained consciousness a short time later. He spoke ramblingly, and the doctors would not permit any attempt at questioning on our part.

It was characteristic of my giant, red-haired friend and shipmate, Kane, that it was he of our little group returning to the *Mobican* who thought of providing consolation for Preacher Mason while we were at sea. He telephoned Eskimo Marie and told her briefly what had happened, adding:

"Take a run out to the hospital once in a while and visit him. The poor beggar doesn't know anyone around here, and he's bound to find it pretty lonesome there all by himself."

Marie promised she would.

Daybreak looked out on the world through bleary eyes. A stiff nor'-easter blowing in from sea dissipated the fog of the previous night, churned the sheltered waters of Halifax's land-locked port into angry, dancing white-caps, which promised dirty weather once the harbour entrances were cleared and we headed out to face the grim, open Atlantic.

Yet, for all the harshness of the elements, the windswept pier was dotted with the feminine well-wishers of the men aboard the *Mobican*. With dresses pressed alluringly against shapely hips and busts, and skirts, like staysails, flapping provocatively about dimpled knees, they fought the menace of the nipping nor'-easter to shout encouragement to us, to cry farewell, adding their high-pitched voices to the crescendo of the storm.

"Take care of yourself, Tom!"

"I'll be waiting for you, Jack!"

"Lay off the mermaids, Bill!"

And the masculine echoes:

"Keep away from sailors while I'm out to sea, Marge!"

"If I hear you've been runnin' around with that Canadian Reserve corporal I'll break your neck, Louise!"

"Stay clear of that crowd on the *Antelope*, Kate!"

"Take stations to unmoor ship!" was piped. The last adieux were hurriedly made, and the *Mobican* backed out from her wharf.

She stood in to the harbour, and nosed her way downstream towards the chill hostility of the heaving sea beyond.

There was to be no sleep for us that night. The cutter fought her way through rearing crests of hissing water, wallowed in slate-grey troughs between foaming hills which threatened to engulf her, as she resolutely and doggedly fought her way out to the Grand Banks and the relief of the cutter awaiting us there.

Down in the *Mobican's* berth-deck we lashed ourselves to our canvas-bottomed bunks out of which every roll and twist of the tortured, storm-tossed ship threatened to vomit us. When it was our watch on deck we took inadequate shelter in the fiddley, where we braced ourselves against the pitch and toss, and drank in the warmth seeping up from the stokehold below.

Donovan, occupying the bunk opposite me, sighed wearily.

"What damn' fools we are to be following the sea."

"What induced you to try this sort of life?" I asked the grave, quiet-spoken man curiously, having frequently wondered what story lay behind those taciturn, well-modelled lips. "Obviously a man of your education could have done better ashore."

He shrugged, hanging grimly on to the sides of his bunk to save himself from being catapulted out.

"Daresay I'm ungrateful to complain. Yes," he admitted, "my education has been good. My father was ambitious for me, poor soul! He had too many ambitions. The Sinn Feiners did in both him and my mother by tossing a bomb into our house one evening in Dublin, on the assumption that our sympathies were pro-British. I was away at the time. When I returned I was tipped off by a friend that I had been marked for the same sort of treatment. It seemed advisable that I should leave the country. I landed an ordinary seaman's berth on an American freighter, which paid me off in 'Frisco. Broke and unable to find a job, I joined the Coast Guard. Yes," he said again, "daresay I'm ungrateful to complain."

Sleep being impossible for us, although Kane snored with unbroken rhythm through the entire watch, Donovan and I chatted quietly far into the night until called to go on deck-watch at midnight. I was proud of his rare confidence.

By morning the gale had expended most of its violence, though the seas still ran high.

"*Cherokee* in sight!"

The hail brought all hands not on watch up from below to witness the ritual which was to take place upon the relieving of one cutter on patrol by another.

Once the relief had been made the *Cherokee* would proceed to Halifax for her in-port period, while we should take over the death-watch for the next fifteen days.

The *Cherokee* was a sister-ship of the *Mohican*. We raced towards each other under the driving impulse of our turbo-electric screws. That the *Cherokee* too had been subjected to considerable dirty weather was indicated by the wide streaks of dried salt on her spar-painted stack and mast where the spray had evaporated.

Long before we were within signalling distance of each other the *Cherokee's* mail, which we had carried from Halifax to her, was brought up on deck and placed in one of our outswung surfboats with a crew told off to man it.

We manœuvred the cutters to within three hundred yards of each other, then rang the engines down and drifted, heaving on the heavy ground swell.

"Into the boat, boys!" barked Surfboat Joe to those of us of the port-watch who were to pull over to the *Cherokee* with the mail.

We climbed into the surfboat, took our places on the thwarts, inserted the rowlocks into their sockets to make certain they were working freely.

"Lower away!" megaphoned Captain Clark to our expectant coxswain.

The turns were slipped off, and we were lowered into the water.

"Unhook aft! Unhook forward! Fend her off there! Let go the sea-painter!" Surfboat Joe's expert, staccato commands came from the sternsheets of the boat, where, with the steering-oar in his ham-like hands, he was directing our operations. "Stand by your oars! Out oars! Give way together!"

With long, sweeping strokes we pulled away from the *Mohican's*

side across the short stretch of sea to where the *Cherokee* lay to, patiently awaiting us.

In a few minutes we reached her, coming up on her stern to make a lee-side landing.

"In bows!" shouted our coxswain to the two men pulling bow oars. "Stand by to take their lines! Way enough! Fend her off there!"

With their eyes magnetized to the bulging mail-sacks we had with us, and stimulated to fast activity by the anticipation of soon examining them, the *Cherokee's* crew threw us heaving-lines and hauled the mail-sacks aboard. These sacks also carried letters written by the *Mohican's* crew which were to be entrusted to the *Cherokee* for mailing when she reached Halifax.

A Jacob's ladder was lowered to us in preparation for use by the scientific staff of the Ice Patrol.

"Have a good trip?" Kane shouted up to one of the *Cherokee's* men hanging over the side, as we awaited the coming of the men of science.

"Good weather most of the time," the man told us loudly, "but they worked the hell out of us taking soundings. That son of a bitch of a professor you birds unloaded on us had us up every goddam night combing the ocean for his —— bugs. He never seems to find enough of them. I pity you guys this trip!"

"He was too seasick during the first patrol we had him," Kane grinned. "Hardly bothered us at all."

"Well, old Bubble-eyes has found his sea-legs now," the other returned with grim assurance. He leaned farther over the side, looked conspiratorially up and down the deck, then asked in a semi-shout, cupping his hands to his mouth secretively, "Want to do us a favour?"

"Sure," Kane agreed readily. "What?"

"Lose the Jonah overboard by the time we come out to relieve you again."

Sounds of commotion at the head of the Jacob's ladder indicated that the subject of the seaman's homicidal suggestion had arrived.

Professor Heinkle, ensconced blinkingly behind a powerful

pair of bifocal glasses, hatless, with a bush of thick black hair writhing over his forehead in the wind, chubby and energetic, and of undeviating indefatigability where his ichthyological investigations were concerned, had requested permission of the United States Coast Guard to spend part of his Sabbatical year away from the faculty of a prominent Eastern university aboard the Ice Patrol cutters. On them he expected to conduct an exhaustive research in the waters off and around the Grand Banks of Newfoundland, where he hoped to make some unusual discoveries.

His university had given his proposed labours its stamp of approval, and Coast Guard Headquarters had sanctioned his request. Professor Heinkle had sailed with us from Boston some weeks before. *Mal de mer*, much to our delight and his disappointment, had made serious inroads upon his work on the first patrol. But now, with his acclimatization to nautical life, we regarded his presence aboard the *Mobican* with gloom.

Nelander expressed our collective dismay.

"Looks like we're in for a lot of misery now he's over his seasickness."

"Pipe down," warned Surfboat Joe. "Here he comes."

Surrounded by seamen and burdened with baggage and a variety of weird-looking instruments, canisters, and nettings, the much-anathematized man of science climbed over the side of the cutter. He had a companion with him, a Coast Guard officer, Lieutenant Carlton, the official Ice Observer, a distinguished oceanographer who every year made the annual Ice Patrol by transferring from one cutter to another and thus staying at sea during the entire period of the Ice Patrol season.

The first clash of the many which featured the long antagonism between the rotund Professor and the crew of the *Mobican* occurred after we had rowed perhaps some three hundred yards away from the *Cherokee* on our way back to our own ship.

"Oh, g-g-gosh!" he exclaimed, with his characteristic slight stutter, peering through the powerful glasses which gave to his magnified eyes the bovine aspect so thoroughly ridiculed by the exasperated crews on the ships which carried him. "I've left

s-some of my instruments aboard the *Ch-Cherokee*. We'll have to go back and get them!"

"It's a little late to think of that now," said Surfboat Joe dourly. "You shoulda thought of that before, Professor. We can't go pullin' all over the ocean."

"I m-must have them," insisted the perturbed Heinkle. "Otherwise my s-s-stay on the *Mobican* will b-be valueless."

Surreptitious grins of glee showed on the faces of the surfboat crew.

"Sit down, Professor," Joe ordered the gesticulating man of science, who was peering agitatedly after the disappearing *Cherokee*. "You'll fall overboard."

"What am I t-to do, Mr C-Carlton?" Heinkle appealed to the oceanographer.

"Better wait until we're alongside the *Mobican*," the latter advised. "Perhaps Captain Clark will radio the *Cherokee* and recall her. But I wouldn't count on it," he added pessimistically.

Professor Heinkle gazed mournfully after the receding *Cherokee* while our crew chuckled among themselves.

"Better not bring the boat under the falls, Josephson," suggested Lieutenant Carlton when we reached the *Mobican*, "until we see what Captain Clark intends doing about Professor Heinkle's instruments. Just lay to off the bridge for the time being."

"Aye, aye, sir," acknowledged Joe, none too happily.

Captain Clark frowned his displeasure upon being informed of the Professor's annoying oversight. The latter stood unsteadily in the lurching surfboat reluctantly braced by two of the crew as he stuttered his dilemma up to the Commander.

"You should have been more careful," Captain Clark megaphoned reprovingly. "You're wasting the *Cherokee's* time. They're in a hurry to get back to Halifax. I'll call them back this time," he promised, "but please exercise more care in your future transfers." To the glumly waiting Joe the captain shouted, "Bring your boat alongside and let Mr Carlton come aboard. Then unload the baggage and lay to and wait for the *Cherokee*."

We received the directions angrily, muttering under our breath. The cold afternoon was drawing to a close. After

disposing of Mr Carlton and the baggage we sat resting on our oars, shivering in the chilly air, mumbling curses at the worried Professor, and awaiting the *Cherokee's* return.

She had obviously received our message by this time, but appeared to be obstinately continuing her course despite the radioed request. The dogged continuance of her passage suggested that her commander was in the throes of a spirited debate with himself as to the advisability of answering the *Mohican's* recall. Finally, courtesy and discretion getting the upper hand of exasperation and impatient frustration, the *Cherokee* turned round.

We stared upward at a row of frowning faces as the returned cutter's crew trained a collective battery of baleful glares on the fluttering Professor. The minutes passed, thirty of them, while we shivered and shook and rested on our oars. Professor Heinkle could not find the missing instruments. With the help of several seamen the ship became the object of a feverish search while the rest of the crew fumed and cursed as the cherished minutes, which might otherwise have been devoted to bringing them nearer their anticipated in-port period in Halifax, were so criminally expended.

At last:

"Shove off!" Surfboat Joe's relieved bellow. We pulled once more towards the *Mohican*, the Professor's missing instruments at our feet. The *Cherokee* whistled angrily and steamed away.

"Well," said Professor Heinkle, "I'm g-glad we f-f-found those instruments." He made a feeble and deplorable joke. "The exercise will g-give you boys a sharper appetite."

"HA! HA! HA!" boomed Kane, a dismal lack of humorous appreciation in his tones.

We were hoisted aboard the *Mohican*. For the next fifteen days we were to take over the watch covering forty-five thousand square miles of fog-blanketed sea in quest of the slipping ghost of those cold waters, that tower of majestic menace—the iceberg!

"Roll out, boys! Hit the deck! Fifteen minutes to eight bells!"

The coxswain of the starboard-watch shook us individually out of sleep, as he made the round of the bunks to remind us that we were due shortly to relieve the watch on deck.

"Better get into your arctics and windproofs," he advised, as

we climbed from our warm bunks and sleepily crawled into our clothing. "I just saw Professor Bubble-eyes come down from the bridge—and you know what that means!"

We knew . . . only too well.

Professor Heinkle prowling the decks at midnight meant that those of us who did not have a wheel or look-out trick to stand during the coming four hours of the graveyard-watch would not spend that period in the warmth of the fiddley, where it was our custom to stand handy for call should the necessity arise. We should be compelled to remain out on the cold, clammy quarter-deck at the Professor's beck and call, being of assistance to him in his cursed research work.

The hoarse bellow of the *Mobican's* fog-whistle mockingly promised what the deck would have in store for us as we laced up our fur-lined arctic boots and donned the hood-like windproofs.

Nelander muttered to himself as he tied his boots with more violence and energy than the simple operation required.

"Why the hell couldn't he stay ashore instead of comin' out here to bother us? This makes three nights in succession we've been fishin' the bottom of the ocean for his goddam' bugs."

With no icebergs reported during the three days which we already had spent on patrol, Professor Heinkle had taken advantage of that fortuitous circumstance to pursue his scientific inquiries to the fullest extent, which, to simple sailormen who had no interest whatever in what life lay beneath the surface of the sea, appeared fanaticism of the most odious and annoying kind, since it encroached on our comforts.

We were kept busy enough with our own work on board the cutter without having to pander to Professor Heinkle's bizarre whims. For the purpose of determining the position of the various ocean currents with a special view to ascertaining their effect on the probable drift of icebergs, also to chart the annual change in demarcation between the Labrador Current and the Gulf Stream, we conducted diligent oceanographic observations.

These inquiries were taken at certain designated positions, known to the oceanographer and his staff, called stations. The latter were all plotted on a chart, numbered serially, and when

the cutter reached one of them the engines were stopped so that the vessel drifted idly while soundings were taken.

Thus it was that a wire cable was lowered sometimes to a depth of three thousand metres, attached to which was a string of from six to eight Nansen bottles at various levels. When these bottles were at the correct desired depths a weight known as a messenger would be released from above to slide down the wire, tipping the first bottle and opening a valve permitting water to enter. When full the valve automatically closed. The messenger would then work identical effects on each bottle all the way down the cable.

All of which was hard work enough . . . but work which we expected to do, and work for which we were paid. Not so the extra fatigue imposed on us by the Professor. To be saddled, therefore, with his diabolical schemes, and to be burdened with the mad assortment of unwieldy attendant paraphernalia which his maritime excavations made necessary, was sufficient to sour the soul of the most placid sailorman, of which species there was a conspicuous rarity aboard the *Mohican*.

Heinkle's strange scientific contraptions were the despair and vituperation of all aboard ship who came into physical contact with them. Objects resembling trawls and nets were lowered for vast depths over the side to rest upon the bed of the sea and there to stay until the Professor thought they had collected a sufficient and diversified quantity of marine and plant life. Then these ponderous annoyances were hauled to the surface amid much grumbled imprecation on the part of the conscripted watch, and eagerly examined by the tireless ichthyologist, whose extravagant bursts of rapture whenever something particularly dank and obnoxious in appearance had been discovered were enough to give us general nausea.

Some of his specimens were so minute that they defied the scrutiny of the naked eye. To our weary crew it frequently seemed we had lowered nets and objects to huge depths merely for the purpose of drawing them to the surface again.

But when such telling eruptions as "*Z-z-zoardicæ—Malthidæ—A-a-asterias glacialis*," and other such crooning mumblings fell from the Professor's absorbed lips we gathered that what had

appeared to us ordinary sea-water had a much more awe-inspiring interpretation for him.

"Relieve the wheel and look-out! The rest of you keep handy for a call!" came the order from the petty-officer of the watch when we had mustered inboard of one of the outswung surfboats and answered to our names as they were called, repeating our stations and duties as members of the lifeboat crew.

The 'call' came quickly enough. A few minutes after eight bells had been struck, Jensen, the petty-officer or coxswain of the watch, walked into the warm fiddle with discouraging information.

"Out on deck, you birds! We're gonna do a little fishing."

Professor Heinkle was waiting for us. He was garbed in a fawn-coloured overcoat, legs encased in long-boots, a woollen balaclava stretched over his head. He peered at us eagerly as we filed morosely on to the cold, fog-wreathed, deck.

"W-we will use the plankton net," he told us without preamble, "and lower it d-d-down to three thousand metres. Then w-we can drop a dredge net over the stern, and a closing n-net amid-ships."

Down in the engine-room the telegraphs clanged, ringing the engines down and bringing the ship to a stop. Once more they sounded, this time astern, bringing the headway off the cutter. After headway had been checked the telegraphs spoke once more at stop position. The *Mohican*, now that the way was off her, drifted idly and silently in the fog, except for the periodic, deep-throated blasts roaring out the prescribed fog-signals.

"C-careful now you don't rip or tear that plankton net," Professor Heinkle admonished anxiously. "It is a v-very expensive bit of fabric."

At the bottom of the plankton net, the largest by far of the many and myriad nets that the ichthyologist possessed in his extensive repertoire, was placed an enamel container into which the hunted specimens would eventually find their way. It was this container which would secure special attention from the scientist after being hauled to the surface from its questing vigil at the sea bottom.

"Lower away!" shouted Jensen to the man operating the hoist. Down . . . down . . . into the icy depths plunged the net.

Professor Heinkle peered solicitously after it. When it had run out three thousand metres he rubbed his hands in satisfaction.

"I'm sure we'll b-bring up something of interest," he remarked. "There m-must be many down there."

"Yes, an' I wish the old sand-crab was down there with 'em," muttered the disgruntled Nelander, with a sour look at Heinkle.

Other nets meanwhile required our attention, a peculiarly cold and uncomfortable task which took the better part of an hour. Then Heinkle decided it was time to haul up the large and voluminous plankton net. We went to work at this arduous job, shivering in the bitter cold night, wiping off, oiling, and guiding the cable back into its drum under the Professor's watchful eyes. The net finally broke the surface. The man of science leaned excitedly over the rail, so far that we thought and hoped he would fall overboard.

"Vast heaving!" called the petty-officer of the watch as the head of the net reached the rail.

"Handle it c-carefully, Kane!" the Professor cried shrilly. "Be careful not to upset the container!"

Kane gingerly reached down and pulled up the rest of the net. He removed the container delicately from the bottom and handed it to the impatient scientist.

"To be or not to be," murmured Donovan, with a quiet smile as he watched Heinkle searching the receptacle under the glare of a cluster of gangway lights.

"Jensen, your flashlight!" the absorbed ichthyologist demanded of the petty-officer.

Despite our lack of interest in Heinkle's work, curiosity got the best of us, and we crowded round him trying to dip our frostbitten noses into the container as we sought for some mystery of the ocean depths our efforts might have brought to light.

"Find anythin', Professor?" Kane asked.

"Indeed!" Heinkle assented triumphantly. "L-look! *Gadus Eglefinus!*"

"Well!" exclaimed Kane, flabbergasted. "You don't say!"

"Larvæ of haddock," the Professor interpreted obligingly. "The first form of haddock life after the eggs have been hatched. And," he added happily, holding the container nearer the gangway lights, "I also see Sebastus."

"Ask him who was that dame I seen him with last night," came Nelander's uninterested voice from the rear of our circle.

"Larvæ of red-fish," explained Heinkle, ignoring the interruption. "Well, well! A really important d-discovery. I didn't think haddock and r-r-red-fish migrated out this far. The University will be glad to know this."

The fog had clouded his spectacles. He handed the container and its precious contents to a seaman with an unpronounceable Finnish name which we had boiled down to George-the-Finn, and said, "Hold this jar while I wipe my glasses. Careful, now, you don't drop it."

George-the-Finn grinned vacuously. He had joined the *Mobican* in Boston a month before, after deserting a Finnish barque. Although he had had a good Finnish education, his knowledge of English was decidedly limited. In fact, his English vocabulary was confined to four descriptive words. George was a good seaman and willing and eager to please. After being handed the container by the anxious Heinkle he walked quickly to the rail and without further ado dumped the contents overboard, walked back, and returned the empty jar to the inarticulate Professor, who was opening and closing his mouth like some of the denizens of the deep which on occasion we had hauled over the side for him.

Pandemonium broke loose when Heinkle recovered the use of his temporarily paralysed vocal chords. He showered abuse on the unbowed but slightly bewildered head of the unfortunate George-the-Finn, words studded with excited stutterings, the tempo and frequency of which noticeably increased when the Professor was aroused.

Understanding that in some mysterious fashion he had not done the right thing, George attempted a placating explanation in the unfamiliar tongue of his new country.

"Son of a bitch," he said, with an ingratiating smile.

Oh, yes . . . it all had its result. Explanations to the outraged Professor by a superior officer, placation by the troubled captain. Heinkle, however, was determined to show us who was master of the situation.

"Lower the plankton net again!" he ordered brusquely. "I don't care if I keep you up here for the rest of the night!"

War declared between Professor Heinkle and the crew of the United States Coast Guard Cutter *Mohican* . . .

Greenland sent most of the icy perils to navigation across our path, huge bergs from the great glaciers on the western coast of that inhospitable land which were floated south by the Labrador current and into the transatlantic shipping lanes.

Once off the Grand Banks of Newfoundland the glittering monsters ultimately end up in the Gulf Stream, where their disintegration is hurried by that body of warm water. For once the Cold Wall is crossed—that line of demarcation between the frigid Labrador Current and the warm Gulf Stream—the days of the iceberg are numbered.

A week is usually the life of a berg once it comes under the benign influence of that tropically temperatured stream. In the months to come we were to see many bergs slipping along with the current, towering high above the *Mohican's* lofty mainmast, and frowning down from awe-inspiring heights upon the puny little ship hovering tenaciously about their waterline.

All man's ingenuity has devised no short cut to the destruction of the huge bergs. With only one-third of their bulk projected above water and two-thirds submerged, sometimes their great draught strands them on the Grand Banks itself, where they remain grounded until either a gale, change in equilibrium, or disintegration sets them adrift once more.

In fantastic shapes, in exquisite beauty, they loom like marble memorials of Nature's chaster architectural brilliance on clear days. Stepped by terraces, and crowned at times by tapering, jagged pinnacles, the iceberg is an impressive illustration of a

Divinity's enigmatic potency—a colossal construction of brooding, transient beauty. But woe betide the luckless vessel colliding with one! Yet so efficient has the Ice Patrol become that since 1913 no ship has foundered in waters covered by the patrol as a result of a collision with an iceberg.

Once it is located by the cutters, the position of the berg is carefully plotted, and a warning broadcast to all transatlantic shipping appraising ship-masters of the presence of ice and advising a change of course that it might be avoided with miles to spare.

To break up an iceberg by gunfire would require more ammunition than a battleship could conveniently carry. Various chemical agents have been tested on occasion, but without results warranting their continued employment. The only tried and true way to circumscribe their disastrous possibilities is the rigid watch kept by the United States Coast Guard.

Came howling down from the frozen wastes of the Arctic Circle a vicious spring gale, sweeping across Labrador and Newfoundland, and swinging out to sea to churn the North Atlantic into a three-day frenzy.

The Newfoundland Government radio-station atop of rugged Cape Race crackled out storm warnings advising shipping of what was to come, urging fishing schooners and other small craft to seek the shelter of the closest harbour.

Eight bells rang out on the *Mohican*—rang out and were torn to shreds by the force of the blustery wind already heralding approaching fury. It was my two-hour trick at the wheel.

Before sunset the vessel had been settled down for the night. Hatches had been battened, extra lashings had been passed around the gun-covers. The outswung surfboats were well gripped in, and life-lines were stretched fore and aft.

Captain Clark decided to spend the night on the bridge keeping watch with the officer of the deck. Our commanding officer was a kindly man, a seaman of the old school, and a veteran of thirty years' service in the Coast Guard, during which time he had seen duty on the Great Lakes, the Pacific, the Atlantic coasts, and Alaska.

"Relief for the wheel, sir," I reported to the officer of the deck, young Ensign Fleming.

"Relieve the wheel, Bart."

"The course is ninety degrees," said the helmsman, relinquishing his post, "and she's damned hard to handle to-night."

It challenged the ability of the most skilled helmsman to hold the *Mohican* to her lurching course. She barely maintained headway. Her engines were rung down to half-speed, and she plunged and rolled in the rising sea like something in torment.

The lubberline would drop off as much as ten degrees to the right or left as it swung crazily round the compass card, requiring constant vigilance on my part to keep the cutter within a degree or two of the course. Captain Clark sympathized with my plight as he walked over to the compass and peered anxiously into the binnacle.

"Having quite a time keeping her on, aren't you, Bart?"

"Yes, sir."

"Watch her as closely as you can," he directed, going to the chart desk to glance over a weather report the quartermaster had just brought up from the radio-room.

"Looks like we're in for it, Mr Fleming," the captain remarked. "Cape Race advises that the gale is expected to reach full force at midnight. Still"—he tried consolation—"we're not directly in its path and may miss the worst of it."

Since sunset the wind had been steadily strengthening. Now the leaping spray broke over the cutter's bows and swept aft in one continuous icy shower. It streaked the windows of the bridge so thickly that those who strained so desperately to pierce the ominous night could make out nothing more than wet chaos.

The radio-room buzzed for attention.

"Answer them and see what they want," the captain told the quartermaster.

The latter spoke into the speaking-tube, then relayed the message to the waiting captain.

"They've got a message for us, sir. Some freighter in trouble. Shall I go down and bring the message up?"

"No," said Captain Clark, unwilling to trust his man to the insecurity of the perilous deck. "Have them repeat the message over the speaking-tube. Mr Fleming will get a pad and pencil and copy it down."

The quartermaster repeated the words as they reached his ear: "Propeller gone. Leaking badly Number Four hold. Lifeboats smashed by storm. Request assistance. Position, latitude 42 degrees 43 minutes north, longitude 51 degrees 27 minutes west. Master, s.s. *Otaki Maru*."

Captain Clark scanned briefly the message which Ensign Fleming had hurriedly written on paper.

"Tell the radio-room to stand by for an answer," he told the quartermaster, then crossed to the chart table, where he plotted the position of the vessel in distress, comparing it with the *Mohican's*, which he already knew.

"They're about a hundred miles north-east of us, Mr Fleming," he announced. "With luck we should arrive at their position by daylight or a little after." He took the pad of paper from Fleming's hands, and drafted a quick reply which he gave the waiting quartermaster by the speaking-tube, for transmission to the radio-room.

"Coast Guard Cutter *Mohican* proceeding to your assistance," the latter read. "Should arrive daylight. Keep me advised. B. L. Clark, Commander."

"They seem to be right in the centre of the storm," said Ensign Fleming glumly, "and with the worst yet to come——"

"Change course to forty-four degrees, and tell the engine-room we'll need all they can give us," said Captain Clark sharply. "Ring up full speed on the telegraphs!"

"Aye, aye, sir," acknowledged the Ensign. "Change course to forty-four degrees, Bart!" he directed me. "Ring up full speed on the telegraphs, Quartermaster."

Full speed ahead . . . straight into the howling storm.

The sea frothed in rage that her might should be so indifferently questioned. Great, smoking seas heaved from seemingly bottomless valleys, strove upward . . . upward . . . as if to wash the face of the dark, belligerent heavens themselves, and

thundered down in outraged exhaustion when they could climb no higher, wreaking disappointed fury on the sturdy little cutter beneath, smothering it in a thick, suffocating blanket of stinging spray.

One huge sea, more vicious than its fellows, crashed aboard like a mad thing dedicated to destruction. It surged upward to lick at the deck of the bridge itself. The shock smashed three windows through which came flying the unimpeded spray to drench us to the skin. Ensign Fleming slipped on the wet deck while trying to retrieve a pair of dividers which had rolled off the chart table, and in doing so struck his head against one of the engine-room telegraphs. He fell, rolling loosely with the motion of the pitching cutter.

"Do what you can for him, Quartermaster," the captain shouted. "I don't think he's badly hurt."

"He's bleeding, sir. If you'll give me a lift with him we can put him on the settee and secure him to it."

They carried the injured officer of the deck between them and secured him to the settee with the aid of lengths of signal halyard, which were passed round his body. It was quite a job.

"I think he needs a doctor, sir," the quartermaster said, with an anxious glance at the unconscious Fleming.

"He probably does," the captain agreed, "but that's out of the question. You'd be washed overboard trying to get below. Watch your steering, Bart!" he admonished me crisply as I wrestled with the wheel. "And don't tell me it's a job!" he forestalled me quickly. "I know it is. Keep her as close on as you can. And, remember, you've got an all-night trick up here—we all have for that matter. There'll be no relief for any of us to-night."

Captain Clark was right. Four bells sounded in the after-part of the pilot-house reminding me it was ten o'clock and that ordinarily my trick at the wheel would have been ended. It was useless to expect any one to attempt that dash across the lurching decks foaming with their insane cargo of tons of icy water. Down below hugging the warmth of the fiddley, the watch on deck sat huddled, their coxswain too wise in the ways of the sea to think about relief. Out on the weather wing of the bridge the look-out,

George-the-Finn, was braced in grim desperation, hanging on as if he had been welded to the rails as he strove to pierce the black swollen fury of the night.

And hourly came the messages from the sinking Japanese freighter.

"Cannot remain afloat much longer. Engine-room flooded."

"We are proceeding to your assistance with all possible speed," the *Mobican* flashed back. "Keep us advised."

"Please hurry. Water gaining rapidly. When do——"

Silence. Silence . . . except for the shrill scream of the raging gale, the hiss and thud of boiling seas, the resolute pounding of the cutter.

"Tell the radio-room to keep on trying to raise them," shouted Captain Clark. "We should be there in another four hours." The quartermaster transmitted the message.

I was exhausted from my straight ten hours at the wheel. Daylight came slowly, a dull grey smudge to the east. Only a few wisps of canvas remained of the gun-covers. Aft two boats had been smashed like matchwood, the captain's dinghy and one of the surfboats. The deck-lockers in which brooms, squiges, and holystones were stowed had disappeared.

And—oh, joyful discovery—all Professor Heinkle's nets were missing!

Of the Japanese freighter there was no sight. Our captain was not unduly depressed.

"They may still be afloat," he told Ensign Fleming, who was now up and about. "Send a look-out aloft."

But even had the disabled *Otaki Maru* loomed into sight at daybreak rescue of her crew would have been an impossibility. No small boat could have lived in those mountainous seas.

By eight o'clock it was possible for those of us who had been marooned on the bridge-deck all night to be relieved. The captain, however, elected to stay up there and await the abatement of the storm.

There was no breakfast or hot coffee awaiting us when we made our hazardous way to the berth-deck below. During the night the galley had been flooded out and the cooks had not yet

succeeded in lighting a fire. Nobody had slept in the hours of darkness—the violence of the ship's pitching had seen to that. With the berth-deck hatches securely battened down the place reeked of the body odours from the eighty men who slept there. After the fresh air of the bridge it was sickening. Men stood about in small groups, hanging grimly on to stanchions for support, munching hard tack.

"I've never seen anythin' like it," said Kane, "an' I've seen some dirty weather in my time. Thought the Tasman Sea was bad enough, but this Atlantic has got 'em all stopped."

"It's an ill wind that blows nobody good," said Donovan, with a quiet chuckle. "Professor Heinkle's nets went over the side last night."

"Thank God for that!" Kane breathed gratefully.

"What's going on up on the bridge, Bart?" Donovan inquired. "Does the Old Man think that Jap tramp is still afloat?"

"I doubt it. My guess is they've sunk hours ago."

"Better get some sleep," advised Kane. "You look all in."

I felt it, too. But sleep was more easily desired than accomplished. I hoisted myself into my bunk, stretched out, and was deposited on the deck with a thud. I climbed back, wrapped my arms and legs tightly round the bunk supports. After six hours of slumber I was awakened at noon by a cry of "She's in sight!"

The *Otaki Maru* had not foundered as had been my pessimistic assumption.

One look at her, however, wallowing heavily in the trough of the seas, helpless and battered, indicated that the fate was not to be long postponed. On her boat-deck huddled together we could make out a group of perhaps twenty men seeking what lee her radio-room provided. Gone were her radio antennæ, we noted. Gone, too, were her lifeboats. The *Otaki Maru*, from a seaman's standpoint, was in a bad way.

"Wonder what the Old Man expects to do?" murmured Donovan.

Kane shrugged his massive shoulders. "What the hell can he do? He's been to sea too damn' long not to know what lowerin'

a boat in this sea would mean. The men would drown like rats. No boat could live out there."

It was not characteristic of Captain Clark to stand in futile dismay when action was demanded, even though most avenues of effort seemed closed. He was not the man to stand in idle, sighing resignation when there were twenty lives to be saved.

The *Mobican* fought her way to windward of the distressed steamer. When about four hundred yards off she began to pump oil overboard. This old stratagem of the sea was unsuccessful. The waves were too violent.

Captain Clark manœuvred closer and tried another expedient. Surfboat Joe was to act the chief rôle in the new attempt. A light, tape-like line was brought from below and attached to a short projectile, which in turn was placed in the bore of a gun specially designed for it. This gun, a cut-down military rifle of the Civil War period and now loaded with a blank cartridge, Joe nestled against his shoulder. He handed the small ball of line to Kane. Joe sighted the gun and fired.

Bang! Our eyes trailed the flight of the line snaking towards the doomed Japanese freighter, watched it successfully fall between the fore- and main-masts of the ship.

"Good shot, Joe!" Kane commended. "You got her across."

The Japanese observed our move. A small manilla line was then bent on to the shot-line, and this the seamen on the foundering vessel were signalled to haul over. They pulled it to them desperately, but a malevolent imp of perversity frustrated them. Yawing badly in the trough of the huge seas, the *Mobican* and the freighter drifted apart. The line, unable to stand the strain—parted!

"Bring up another line!" megaphoned the resourceful Captain Clark. "We'll secure it to the self-bailer, lower it away, and try to drift it down on them."

The self-bailing lifeboats used by the Coast Guard are sturdy little craft and so designed as to buoyancy as to be well-nigh unsinkable. Even when capsized they regain equilibrium immediately, righting themselves in the twinkling of an eye.

Once the self-bailer had been lowered overboard it dropped

rapidly astern. As the *Mobican* went ahead on her engines the line was paid out, drifting down upon the wallowing *Otaki Maru*. All hopes of its efficacy faded, however, when a high-towering wave picked it up as it neared the Japanese steamer and dashed it against the side of the stricken vessel, shattering its buoyancy tanks and hull.

Captain Clark undauntedly cried, "Haul in the line! We'll try and float a raft down to them!"

Aboard the *Mobican* were two life-rafts, a type known to the Service as doughnut rafts, so called because of their resemblance to that cake. These rafts are constructed of cork, but are by no means waterproof. Those using them sit on a wooden grating suspended between the surrounding rings of cork and can expect to be waist-deep in water during the process.

We secured one to a line, and paid it out as it drifted down on the *Otaki Maru*. To our general satisfaction it gained its objective without mishap. The Japanese did not have to be told what to do. They secured it to the side of their rolling ship, and ten of them climbed down on to it.

Getting them aboard the *Mobican* when we hauled them over to us was another problem which we solved by throwing them heaving-lines which they tied round their bodies. We drew them up to our deck one by one, and then repeated the entire manoeuvre to rescue the remaining batch of men still aboard the imperilled tramp.

One hour after the last of the rescued men had been hurried down below to the sick-bay for attention by our doctor the deserted ship took her death plunge, following to the freezing depths the eight of her crew, including the captain and chief officer, who had been swept overboard before our cutter hove into view.

Two days later we hailed a passing tramp and transferred our Japanese guests. They were bound for Boston.

We of the *Mobican* continued on a new course searching for more trouble.

Four

BEING THE FUNDAMENTALISTS THEY ARE, THE PRIMARY concerns of sailormen while on board ship revolve about their animal appeasements.

While the cuisine aboard the *Mobican* could not be said to imperil the freshness of our palates or to dull it for the richer fare of shore, it was nourishing. Plain, simple food, it compared well with that served aboard the average merchant vessel or Coast Guard cutter.

The one fly in the ointment as the food reached our hungry mouths aboard the cutter was the consistent misdemeanour of a soulless cook whose name was Hotcakes Petersen, a Swede. How he ever obtained a cook's rating in the Coast Guard was a mystery to us. The chief results of his slovenly, greasy cooking were collective indigestion and diarrhoea. Before joining the Service he had been an iron-moulder's apprentice in his native land, a trade which hardly prepared him for the subtler demands of the table. His chief gastronomical atrocity was the hot-cakes which gave him his cognomen, by which sinisterly suggestive appellation he was called all over the ship.

For a long time now we had suffered the enervating onslaughts of Hotcakes' galley products. Matters came to a head one morning when this untalented hash-slinger provoked the irrepressible vengeance of his victims.

"There'll be some fun this morning," hinted a Chilean with the un-Chilean name of Smythe which we had automatically transformed to "Chile."

We were seated at breakfast, the main dish of which was a huge platter of the cook's iron-clad hot-cakes.

"God, they're tough!" grumbled Kane, sinking his teeth into one of the unresilient objects. "It's easy to tell who's on watch in the galley. Petersen probably thought he was pouring iron into a mould when he poured these on to the galley range."

"As tough as rubber gaskets," pronounced Donovan, tentatively biting into one.

"They'd make fine collision mats," remarked the Bugler.

George-the-Finn was the only man in the watch who appeared to relish the hot-cakes, and with whose digestive apparatus they fused without the subsequent internal pyrotechnics characteristic of our dalliance with them. We rather awesomely attributed this remarkable circumstance to the well-nigh indestructible digestion most Finns have and George's general blissful ignorance.

Instead of eating this morning's hot-cakes, all hands merely piled them on their plates, heaping them to the full. The Mess cook, after having made three trips to the galley for the hot-cakes strangely in demand this epochal morning, returned to inform us that we had cleaned the galley of them and that Petersen had declared he had cooked all he intended to that day.

Chile Smythe winked. "Go up and tell him his cakes are getting better and better and that now we can't resist 'em. Ask him to step down here and see for himself."

The Mess cook went on his errand. A stillness sat upon the Mess table—the quiet before the storm. Men glanced at each other knowingly, saying nothing, stirring their coffee, flicking anticipatory glances up at the step-ladder leading down from the quarterdeck.

Incredulous when informed by the Mess cook that the crew had had a change of heart—or, more appropriately, of stomach—and were doing such satisfactory justice to his hot-cakes, Petersen readily agreed to return and convince himself by the witness of his own eyes.

A pair of grease-stained trousers descended the ladder on which all hands now had their eyes, followed by a still greasier apron and the greasiest scrutiny Hotcakes Petersen had ever deposited on a defenceless crew whose well-being he was so insidiously undermining.

"Let him have 'em!"

One enraged battle-cry followed the other; one enthusiastic exhortation on the heels of its predecessor.

"Take these, you greasy chow butcher!"

"You've ruined every stomach aboard this ship!"

A veritable barrage of hot-cakes whistled round the surprised,

cowering cook. He made a leap for the step-ladder. But in anticipation of that manœuvre some one had thoughtfully closed the hatch above it, thus cutting off Hotcakes' only means of exit.

Innovations introduced into the chastisement of the supplicatory cook were the dipping of the tough hot-cakes in the jars of syrup handy, and soaking of them in hot coffee. This moistening treatment seemed to add considerably more body to the projectiles, and they smacked on the cook's head and face and body with a most satisfactory sound of contact. Petersen floundered about the berth-deck, shouting and clawing syrup from his face and eyes, a perfect target for the enraged bombardiers.

Chile Smythe, whose original idea seemed to have resulted in such gratifying result, topped it with a new shouted suggestion: "Let's make him eat some of his collision mats!"

The proposal was noted, immediately voted upon in an approving bellow, and put into execution forthwith. The cook was tripped, and the hot-cakes crammed down his throat.

"Baptize him with the syrup!" cried Chile, whose morning this undoubtedly was.

With the simple efficiency of ship life the operation was immediately performed. The tables were denuded of their syrup bowls and the contents lavishly deposited on the hoarsely ranting, squirming cook. To crown the morning's punitive activity Chile announced that Petersen would have to run the gauntlet if he wanted his freedom, which he was made to do immediately.

Kane, the Bugler, Captain Milton, and myself were stationed at the very end of the line. We were given the honour of heaving the last of the ammunition at the cook as he fled up the only available exit, a passageway leading forward.

"Get going, you!" shouted Chile, prodding him with a deftly placed kick.

As Petersen stumbled blindly by us we took aim and delivered the last of the hot-cakes.

To a mixed reaction we observed that our aim had been faulty, that Petersen had escaped this last vigorous peroration to persecution, and that a new target which loomed so unexpectedly

into the proceedings received the fullest possible effect of our attentions.

The unappreciative recipient of our barrage was Professor Heinkle, our Nemesis of the Nets. He happened to be just coming out of the store-room which he used as a laboratory. Attracted by the noise, he had followed up his curiosity to discover the cause. He blinked with surprise through his thick glasses as one of the syrup cakes flattened squarely against his face. His predicament, however, far from having any salutary effect on the aroused crew, appeared to aggravate it.

"Here's a good chance to get even with that bubble-eyed boob, too!"

"Let him have it!"

Like the cook, Professor Heinkle fled precipitately, dripping sticky hot-cakes like an enraged tornado flinging aside the result of its fury.

The débâcle of the hot-cakes had its ringing aftermath when the subsequent disciplinary hearing developed. The Master-at-arms, a petty-officer charged with the policing of the ship and the preservation of good order aboard, had not been present on the berth-deck during the orgy of syrup and sadism. We suspected he had known what was likely to transpire during that historic breakfast and had purposely found business in other parts of the ship at that time. But the official investigation inflicted upon him the necessity of viewing the scene of our Roman holiday. The berth-deck looked as if a cyclone had whisked through all the port-holes on the starboard side and had dived through the opposite ones on the port side, not neglecting to give personal attention to everything in the place during its brief but cataclysmic sojourn. Hot-cakes hung from bulkheads, stanchions, and the overhead in clusters, like some bizarre fruit, with the deck itself a deep carpet of them.

"Now that you've had your fun," observed the impressed Master-at-arms, addressing us, "you birds turn to and clean up this mess."

Later in the day he delivered a piece of disconcerting news. "The four of you"—he specified Kane, the Bugler, Captain

Milton, and myself—"have a date with the Old Man this afternoon."

Captain Clark's frown was ominous as he snapped without preamble when we stood before him, "You four men are accused of throwing hot-cakes at Professor Heinkle and Ship's Cook Petersen. What have you to say for yourselves?"

Why we four had been singled out from a group of some sixty participants was not quite clear to me until Professor Heinkle, blinking at us indignantly, remarked, "Yes, I can positively identify these four men, Captain."

The Bugler took upon himself the unauthorized rôle of spokes man for the rest of us, a responsibility we were loath for him to assume, for his intelligence was hardly a thing of comment aboard.

"We didn't mean to hit the Professor, Captain," he confessed naïvely. "He just happened to get in the way."

"Oh, so you admit throwing hot-cakes!" said the captain.

Belatedly the Bugler realized his course was not the most advisable. He gulped.

"It was all in fun, sir," I threw in feebly.

Captain Clark gazed at me icily. "All in fun, eh? I must say you have a most distorted sense of humour. You think the destruction of Government property comes under the heading of fun, do you?"

"Those hot-cakes were made to be thrown," interjected Kane recklessly. "If that Petersen calls himself a cook I'm a blacksmith. If you had to eat the food he cooks you'd think so too. He spoils more food every month than he's worth."

Kane's ill-advised comment only served to increase the captain's ire.

"As regards Petersen's culinary ability, that is not for you to decide, Kane," he replied, with acerbity. "That is an opinion confined to the Commissary Officer. There is a time and place for everything aboard any ship under my command. If you had some objections to the cooking you should have lodged your complaint in the proper quarter. Taking the law into your own hands, and violating Coast Guard regulations to the extent of

destroying Government property, offers no solution, and is a feeble explanation."

At this juncture Captain Milton saw fit to intrude a few remarks pertinent to the subject at hand, but the commanding officer forestalled him with a statement calculated to fill us with considerable misgivings.

"I've heard enough already to establish the fact that you four men were involved in this morning's scandalous affair. You will be tried by a summary court. Dismiss!"

As forthcoming defendants before a Coast Guard court we naturally had the right to engage counsel on our own behalf. Such an individual was usually a commissioned or warrant-officer who could volunteer his services towards that end. The *Mohican*, like all ships, abounded in sea lawyers, but none appeared to possess more talent than was necessary to offer ridiculous and illogical suggestion.

"Let's ask Surfboat Joe about it," I proposed. "He should be able to tell us what to do. He's been in enough trouble himself in his time."

Joe spoke glibly from long experience before many Coast Guard courts. Although his crimes were generally concerned with difficulties in which women figured most prominently, we felt his digest of our own case would prove of value even though it centred round a misplaced tableful of hot-cakes rather than a misplaced bed of hot women.

We approached our hoary old oracle in his quarters, where we found him smoking a meditative pipe and mooning over a small, intimate magazine devoted to the art of classical photography portraying female models in various stages of provocative undress.

"It's this way," said Joe, after listening to us. "Coast Guard courts, like most other courts, are usually in the bag."

"In the bag?"

"I mean that a court most times has two strikes on you before you come to bat. You wouldn't be facing one otherwise, see?"

We saw.

"It wouldn't do you guys much good to plead not guilty," Joe continued, "because you've already confessed to slinging those hot-cakes. And you know what officers are. This court means extra duty for them, and they'll want to get it over as quickly as possible. If you throw a monkey-wrench into the works with a plea of not guilty they'll konk you with a stiff sentence—mark my words! Remember," he warned gravely, "they can soak you thirty days' pay on a summary, or make you eat bread and water for twenty days behind bars. Best thing you can do," he advised, "is plead guilty. That'll most likely only cost you a few bucks. But take it from a guy who knows; stir 'em up and they'll give you hell!"

We thanked Joe for his well-meant advice and left him to his pipe and pippins.

"He's right," Kane agreed. "I'd hate to spend twenty days in the brig with Halifax only a few days ahead of us."

The Bugler, whose decisions were invariably swayed by the last voice to reach his ear, chimed in assent. I too thought the course a wise one. The only one to stand out was Captain Milton, the Midas of the *Mohican* and the custodian of its lavatories.

"I'm gonna fight this!" he declared doggedly. "I'm not goin' to take it on the chin an' be fined for throwin' a few lousy hot-cakes."

"What's a few dollars in your moneyed life?" I asked, trying to reason with him. "If you get the court stirred up, as Joe says, we're all likely to wind up in the gaol."

"Sure!" the Bugler affirmed. "An' who'll you get for counsel? An officer? Nuts! He's bound to see you haven't got a chance and'll tip you off to plead guilty."

Milton's thin lips curled contemptuously. "An officer—pooh! I wouldn't want one o' them defendin' me. There's a coupla guys back aft with us who've got the savvy, an' I'll get the savviest one o' them an' pay him a few bucks to do a right good job for me. If you guys had any sense, which you ain't, you'd get him to go bat for you, too."

"Who are you going to get?" I asked curiously.

"Donovan—the smartest guy on this ship," he replied.

Donovan? That quiet, grave, cultured Irishman defend this little, rat-like Shylock of the sea?

"Of course I know he hasn't got a chance," said Donovan, when I questioned him later about Milton's employment of him as defending counsel. "But I owe him twenty-eight dollars," he confided, with a wry smile, "including interest, on a loan he let me have before leaving Halifax. He's promised to forget it if I defend him. There's nothing I can really offer in the way of a sensible and intelligent defence, but if he's willing to overlook those twenty-eight dollars—who am I to snub opportunity?"

The day before we were scheduled to be brought for trial we were served with a typewritten sheet in which were incorporated the charges preferred against us.

They were identical in phraseology. Mine read:

On or about the hour of 7.30 A.M., February 22, 1922, Paul Bart, Seaman (first class), U.S. Coast Guard, is charged with wilfully throwing hot-cakes around and about the berth-deck of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Mohican*, thereby rendering them unfit for use, and acting in a manner detrimental to the preservation and good order of discipline as laid down by the regulations established for the government of the U.S. Coast Guard. Said Paul Bart, Seaman (first class), to be brought for trial by a Coast Guard Summary Court at a time and date decided upon by the President of the said Court.

The court before which we were to be tried was convened in the cutter's wardroom, a part of the ship occupied by the commissioned officers, and one whose precincts we seldom invaded save on such solemn occasions as the one with which we were now concerned.

Sworn in shortly after the noonday meal, the President, Lieutenant Blanton, after a meaningful glance at the wardroom clock, read out the charge to me, and asked, with another clock-ward glance, how I pleaded.

"Guilty, sir!"

The lieutenant beamed approvingly.

"Very well. The court accepts your plea of guilty. No statement to make concerning the circumstances of the case?"

"No, sir."

Kane's and the Bugler's cases were likewise disposed of with neat dispatch. Captain Milton was the last to be tried. He sat himself with mongrel belligerency at the foot of the table opposite Donovan. The latter attempted to look as much like a lawyer as his distaste for the proceedings and his natural antagonism towards his client would permit him. Captain Milton said loudly in answer to the court's routine inquiry "I plead not guilty, sir!"

Lieutenant Blanton frowned, and ran a mildly exasperated hand over his florid face. Visions of a comfortable after-lunch nap began to fade. He bent a hardening eye upon the defendant.

"I see you have retained counsel," he remarked, with a glance at Donovan.

The prosecutor up to this time had been inactive. Now he arose and addressed his brother officers.

"I will endeavour to prove to your satisfaction, gentlemen, that Milton is guilty as charged in that he wilfully and with malice aforethought threw hot-cakes around and about the berth-deck in the manner stated by the charge which has been read out to him. I will also produce two witnesses ready to substantiate these charges to the letter!"

Professor Heinkle and Hotcakes Petersen, still looking somewhat sticky, as it appeared to my receptive imagination, were now sworn in.

"Did you see Milton throw hot-cakes around the berth-deck on the morning specified?" the prosecutor demanded of the scientist.

"I d-did!" stuttered that vengeful worthy grimly. "Three of the odious objects s-struck me full in the face."

"That will be all, Professor," the prosecutor purred, and nodded towards Donovan in indication that he might question the witness.

"Professor Heinkle," said Donovan quietly, getting to his feet, "you are near-sighted, aren't you?"

"I am."

"That being the case, can you be certain beyond doubt that the accused was the thrower of the hot-cakes which you allege

struck you in the face when you must have been at least thirty or forty feet distant?"

"I c-can!"

"What makes you so certain?"

"Because he employed a m-most uncomplimentary epithet in conjunction with the assault," declared Professor Heinkle harshly. "Never having been the recipient of such a form of address in my whole career—at least, not within m-my hearing—I must admit to having b-been peculiarly impressed with it."

"And the alleged remark, Professor?"

"He hurled the h-hot-cake liberally saturated in syrup and s-said, 'Take that, you f-frog-eyed son-of-a-bitch,' and also further snarled that I was the cause of his and his sh-shipmates being d-deprived of their normal rest during the n-night watches because of my scientific pursuits."

"I didn't!" shouted Milton.

"Would you like to take the witness chair when the Professor vacates it?" the prosecutor inquired, with deceptive gentleness.

"You bet!" declared Milton roundly.

"I have finished with the witness," said Donovan, with an expressive glare at the impulsive Shylock.

Hotcakes Petersen's testimony corroborated that of the ichthyologist with descriptive addenda regarding the extent of his own injuries.

Although Donovan had cautioned Captain Milton before the trial not to let himself be inveigled into the witness chair on his own behalf, the moneylender had not seen fit to abide by this judicious advice. His mental equipment was hardly sufficient to cope with the practised trickeries of the able prosecution.

"You may take the chair," said the latter oilily, with a sweep of his hand, and Milton let himself be gathered into the fold.

The proceedings had already consumed half an hour. The President of the Court had now resigned himself to the loss of his after-lunch nap and stared balefully at the accused.

"In the face of the evidence already brought out you persist in the maintenance of your original plea of not guilty?"

"Yes, sir," insisted the obstinate usurer.

"Why?" asked the prosecutor blandly.

"Because," replied Milton unthinkingly, "Professor Bubble—er—Professor Heinkle did not see me heave any hot-cakes. I might have called him a frog-eyed son-of-a-bitch," he admitted, "but I was all out of hot-cakes when he showed up!"

"All out of hot-cakes? Then you *did* throw some before the Professor turned up?"

"I—I——" Milton stuttered and looked appealingly at the disgusted Donovan. "Well, not many, sir," he finished feebly.

The court was concluded. Weeks would have to pass before the proceedings were finally disposed of in far-off Washington.

I met Donovan pacing angrily up and down the decks a little later, smoking his pipe with a vehemence strange to him.

"What do you think of that wizened little Shylock?" he burst out. "Refused to take anything more off my debt but the few dollars' interest."

"But——"

"Just because I didn't win his case for him!" shouted the outraged Irishman.

No wonder Captain Milton was the *Mohican's* man of finance.

One morning we awoke to find the *Mohican* hove to under a sombre sky. Her engines were stopped, and she drifted idly on a slate-coloured but placid sea.

We were to participate in an annual ceremony conducted by the United States Coast Guard commemorating a disaster which had been directly responsible for the organization of the International Ice Patrol.

There is little that is prepossessing about latitude 41° 26' N. longitude 50° 14' W.; nothing likely to set apart this segment of sea from the vast monotonous stretch we saw every day off the Grand Banks. Yet beneath the cutter's drifting keel, or somewhere in the close vicinity, 1513 souls had gone to a watery grave when the "unsinkable" *Titanic* had collided with the drifting iceberg which had marked the greatest maritime tragedy of all history.

Ten years before to the day Ginger Kane and several companions, including myself, had ridden into the little Australian bush town of Hughendon, in North Queensland. We were hot, tired, dusty, and ripe for the pleasures of the town after weeks of prospecting for gold and kangaroo-shooting. While I flirted with the barmaid at a drinking house, one of our party, a rather enigmatic English insurance agent by name of Swithington, sombrely informed me of the sinking of the *Titanic*. The North Atlantic was on the other side of the world. The pretty barmaid was quite close to me—one of the first white women I had seen in many a day during our wanderings in the bush-country with its glut of black aborigines. I deplored the tragedy of the ship's sinking, but was not greatly interested in the sad tidings.

And now, ten years later, I found myself with Kane up on the grey waste of the North Atlantic. We were members of the crew of a United States Coast Guard cutter and two of a picked squad of eight men who were to fire three volleys in memory of those whose resting-place was below us.

"All hands will fall in for muster on the quarterdeck at ten o'clock!" piped the Master-at-arms while we were eating breakfast. "Uniform of the day will be dress-blues, pea jackets, and flat-hats. The following named eight men will comprise a firing squad and will draw ammunition, rifles, belts, and bayonets from the armoury fifteen minutes before muster!"

"Well," mused Kane, wiping the excess oil off his rifle with a rag in the armoury when we went to draw our equipment later, "this is a hell of a long way from Hughendon. I wonder if we'll ever get back to the bush?"

"Not for three years, anyway," I sighed. We had signed enlistment papers to serve that period in the Coast Guard. Australia, our native land, its bounding kangaroos, cachinnatory kookaburras, kohala bears, and other memories were far away.

Surfboat Joe stuck his head into the armoury with a bellow: "Firing squad fall in on the quarterdeck!"

Aft the colours had been half-masted since sunrise, and above them, fluttering in the cold, raw breeze, was hoisted the church pennant, the only flag which is ever raised above the National

Ensign of the United States. On the port side of the quarterdeck the crew had been mustered in double rank; on the starboard side stood the commissioned and warrant officers in full dress, their sword-hilts glistening in the dull light.

Amidships Captain Clark was about to begin the service. In front of him were heaped a number of wreaths which were to be cast overboard at the end of the ceremony. They had been given by relatives of those whose lives had been lost in the catastrophe and by the more fortunate who had survived the disaster.

Captain Clark was an effective orator when inspired by sentiment. His words were simple, his delivery quiet and dramatic in its lack of dramatic exaggeration.

"We are gathered here to commemorate the passing of those who perished aboard the *Titanic* ten years ago to-day. The best traditions of the sea were closely followed on that unfortunate occasion. Her captain, E. J. Smith, standing on the bridge until the instant his ship sank beneath the surface, died in a manner coincident with the great bravery exhibited by so many seamen in the development of his country's hallowed traditions. Many of you were boys and youths ten years ago, so perhaps it is only fitting that I draw your attention to the events which preceded and followed this catastrophe."

Captain Clark's voice rolled on quietly. We were absorbed in what he had to say, the sad litany accentuated by the plaintive call of a few terns wheeling above the ship.

"The *Titanic*, pride of the White Star Line, and proclaimed by her builders to be unsinkable, sailed from Southampton on her maiden voyage April 10, 1912. Her passenger list included the names of many of the world's great. Four days later, at eleven-twenty at night, her look-out reported an iceberg. Too late to avoid it, her bottom plates were stove in and crushed by jagged, submerged spurs. A dance was in progress at the time. No panic followed the collision. The orchestra remained playing. The danger was laughingly minimized. For many of the dancers fate had decreed this last gaiety to be a macabre masquerade—a death-dance. Later the orchestra was to play another tune—a

hymn—when the gravity of the occasion could not be overlooked further, a tune that must have solaced many a despairing heart aboard the ill-fated ship.”

Captain Clark paused, his eyes on the quiet, dull sea.

“Her captain, aware of the true situation, had sent out a series of radio messages to all shipping in the vicinity, advising them of the *Titanic*’s predicament. ‘CQD . . . CQD . . . Come quick! Distress!’ The plea, flashed out into the quiet, dark night, was quickly followed by the more poignant summons. ‘SOS . . . SOS.’ The old tradition of the sea ‘women and children first’ prevailed. Husbands helped secure lifebelts around wives and children, helped them into lifeboats in which there was no room for themselves. At 2 A.M. on the morning of April 15, almost three hours after her collision with the iceberg, the *Titanic* plunged to her death, carrying with her some fifteen hundred and thirteen persons. Appalled by this tragic loss of life, immediate steps were taken by the great Maritime Powers to patrol the iceberg zones, and for the remainder of 1912 the U.S. Navy dispatched two cruisers to take over the patrol. In the following year the U.S. Coast Guard was delegated to perform this duty and has been carrying on ever since, the cost of which activity is borne by the leading Maritime Powers, each paying in proportion to the tonnage under its flag.”

Captain Clark had ended. Only the lapping of the sea at the cutter’s side was heard, and the quickly suppressed cough of a man who had been listening with bated breath.

The *Mohican*’s surgeon opened a prayer-book and began to read aloud the solemn burial service of the sea.

As his words droned to a finish two men stepped out of ranks to pick up the wreaths of flowers and cast them overboard into the cold, merciless, waiting sea. The curious terns above swooped down on the quietly floating wreaths. They began to peck at the foliage.

“Squad, attention!” Surfboat’s contribution to the memorial service. “Load! Aim! Fire!”

Three volleys crashed out, shattering the quiet, disturbing the terns fluttering around the wreaths gently floating farther and

farther away. Bolton, the Bugler, lifted his instrument to his lips. Out over the tranquil, brooding, slate-grey sea floated the silvery notes of infinite melancholy.

Then the prosaic:

"Crew dismissed!" and we went below, the captain's words, the surgeon's prayers, the crash of musketry, the muted strains of the Last Post, the cry of the Arctic terns, and the inarticulate eloquence of the dead below, seemed to merge in our minds into one chaotic, but somehow lovely, lonely conception of life itself.

Five

WHEN SIGHTED FROM THE CROW'S NEST OF THE cutters on the Ice Patrol those lurking, crystal prowlers of the sea, the icebergs, sometimes presented as many as three distinct images as they loomed in the distance.

On cold, clear moonlight nights they could be seen for a distance of five miles, rising in ghostly grandeur. In foggy weather their presence could not be detected much farther than a hundred yards. A cloudless day would afford visibility of them for twenty miles. Thus the variegated atmospheric conditions characteristic of that section of the Atlantic kept the look-outs on the constant *qui vive*.

A trick in the crow's nest during the early spring months on the International Ice Patrol is no sinecure. Given scant shelter from the biting wind by the canvas windbreak encircling the lofty perch, the station can hardly be considered an enviable one, even fortified by heavy woollen underclothes, blue uniform, and Arctic additions.

A speaking-tube ran down the mast to the navigating bridge below, and through this medium of communication reports were given to the officer of the deck whenever the bergs were sighted. I was to pass many solitary hours perched in the crow's nest during the Ice Patrol season, peering out over the bleak panorama

of dull sea, staring through powerful binoculars in a slow sweep of the enigmatic horizon.

Occasionally from aloft we witnessed the strange phenomenon of the flow of the Atlantic's antagonistic currents, the Gulf Stream and the Labrador, struggling for domination, changing the position of the 'Cold Wall'—the waterline between them. One of the missions of the Ice Patrol was to determine the changing boundary of these two streams, for their relative locations exercised no small influence upon the annual influx and disposition of the icebergs. The line of demarcation could be plainly seen when the weather was clear—the Gulf Stream warm, tropical, indigo in aspect, and the frigid Labrador Current a dull slate-grey.

Disaster from a host of sources other than the iceberg peril crossed our course, particularly in thick weather. Thrills, action, personalities, were kaleidoscopic. It can be truly said that in peace-time the Coast Guard renders its greatest service to humanity, and that service under its thirteen-starred ensign is infinitely more stimulating than service in the Army or in the Navy during the world's vacation from armed hostility. There is always something doing—occasional mutinies to suppress on merchant vessels, the pursuit of contraband smugglers off the coasts of the United States, protection of the seal herds off Alaska during the mating season, derelicts to be salvaged or destroyed—but, above all, the preservation of life and property at sea.

An instance of the unpredictable which crossed our sentry course developed one Sunday morning when the *Mohican* lay hove to, well to the leeward of a spire-topped berg which was rearing its awesome two-hundred-and-fifty feet above.

Our radio operators had picked up a message.

Ran down Portuguese barquentine *Ramon* while proceeding at reduced speed through thick fog. Rescued crew. Am continuing to port of destination, New York. Advise that *Ramon* was left in sinking condition but may still be afloat offering potential hazard to safe navigation.

The information came from the *Mauretania*, the crack Southampton-to-New-York liner. "Reduced speed" for the

Mauretania meant twenty knots, seven knots below her standard speed.

The unfortunate Portuguese vessel had been slipping along in the fog. Her foghorns had bellowed with mandatory regularity, but sound at sea is deceptive. A huge, knife-like bow materialized from the heavy shroud of mist, slicing into her and cleaving her hull like matchwood.

"Barquentine dead ahead of the bows!" the vigilant look-outs of the palatial transatlantic liner no doubt had reported as soon as they detected substance in the misleading shadow, but they had been too late. An effort had been made to reverse engines and change course, but the *Mauretania* was on the doomed barquentine before her destructive prow could be curbed. A slight shudder . . . a bump felt aboard the gargantuan ship as her cutwater knifed the smaller vessel, and her master orders boats over the side simultaneously with the telegraph signal to the engine-room to reverse engines so that the liner might withdraw from the breach she had made. The crew of the barquentine rescued . . . on again for New York, at which port she would probably arrive right on schedule.

The neglected residue of the meeting of two ships in the night that did not pass is left for the Coast Guard.

The position of the collision lay some forty miles to the southward—a three-hour run for the *Mobican*. Soon the giant iceberg is left astern, the cutter's turbo-electric screw turning over at full speed. The *Ramon*, if still afloat, meant menace to navigation. The sooner she was destroyed the safer the sea. Down below in the *Mobican's* magazines T.N.T. wrecking mines awaited their use.

Surfboat Joe was an expert when it came to demolition work. His twenty-nine years at sea had been chequered with many such duties.

"I'll show you lads how the trick is done," he promised happily, sniffing like some old war-horse at the smell of powder.

"We've got to find her first," Donovan asserted. "She may have foundered by this time. She must have been in a bad way, otherwise the Pork-and-beaners wouldn't have abandoned her."

"Pork-and-beaners?" echoed the mystified Joe.

"It's a name we gave the Portuguese troops during the War," Donovan explained, with a smile.

"Don't worry about us findin' her," said Joe confidently. "If she's afloat the Old Man will find her. He can smell derelicts in his sleep."

I hoped we should find her. Mining a derelict would be a new experience for me, another of the many I had tasted since enlisting.

Bolton, the Bugler, joined us on deck, bursting with a confidence.

"Look who's comin'," Kane growled unappreciatively. "Wonder what dirt he wants to spill now?"

The Bugler was an ambulating depository for ship's gossip. He took an odd pride in being the cutter's prize scandalmonger and news-disseminator. If he could be the first with dramatic tidings unknown to the rest of us he enjoyed a glow of self-important pleasure. He was an innocuous, vapid type. It was this harmlessness, beyond what unpleasantness his story-telling would spread, that saved him from many a disciplinary punch on the nose.

Much of his information he scavenged from the officer's Mess attendants and stewards, his craps-shooting cronies on pay-days. One of his silly ambitions was to steal some of Surfboat Joe's amorous thunder in port, but he lacked the older seaman's skilled technique and experience.

Halifax had not treated him too kindly on the last in-port trip. Like some ten others of the crew, he had loved too lavishly and decidedly unwisely. Three days after the ship cleared port, evidences of the Bugler's indiscretions ashore began to manifest themselves. He brought his case of 'Cupid's catarrh' to our long-suffering but practised ship's surgeon.

"What d'you think?" he asked, as he came up to us, an anticipatory grin on his insipid, immature face.

"That you're goin' to tell us we're headin' to pick up the *Ramon*," snorted Kane.

"No!" disavowed the Bugler triumphantly. "It's about Iodine Mike."

"Well, what about him?" Vague interest regarding our chief pharmacist's mate stirred within us.

The Bugler chuckled inanely. "I went by the sick-bay to see him. Remember that long-winded lecture he gave us just before we had our first liberty in Halifax—about taking 'adequate precautions' with the girls?"

"Didn't seem to do you much good," said Kane.

"Haw!" laughed the Bugler. He savoured the climax of his story with his own appreciative chucklings. "I caught him red-handed. Said he was just taking 'adequate precautions'—and we've been at sea fifteen days!" yelped the *raconteur*.

It seemed, as with many another, that Iodine Mike had about as sharp a line of demarcation between practice and preaching as that which existed between the Gulf Stream and the Labrador Current. For once we encouraged the Bugler's pleasure in himself by rewarding him with our own laughter.

The look-out picked up the *Ramon* quite late in the afternoon. Her holds were flooded with water, and she had a gaping hole amidships. But she was still afloat, and what was stranger still, she retained her upright position.

As we drew abeam of the three-masted barquentine we noted her name emblazoned in large letters on her stern and beneath it her port of registry—Lisbon.

Her mainmast had gone overboard as a result of the collision, but her fore- and mizzen-masts still stood, though the sails had been lowered before she was abandoned.

"She'll be an easy one to blow up," Surfboat Joe predicted, gazing at the nearing sailing-vessel.

Much to our resentment, our despised scientist, Professor Heinkle, obtained permission from Captain Clark to accompany the demolition party over to the *Ramon*, so that he might observe the manoeuvre at first hand. Surfboat Joe was incensed at this intrusion. He quivered up to his grizzled, greying eyebrows.

"We haven't got room for him in the boat, sir," he protested to the captain. "This is a risky job, and he'll only be in the way!"

"You will make room for Professor Heinkle," our commander instructed Joe coldly, "and you will also take all precautions for his safety, for which I shall hold you directly responsible. You will also answer any questions he may put to you and instruct him in the manner in which the Coast Guard conducts such a wrecking operation."

"But, sir——"

"That will be all!" snapped the captain, waving the disgruntled complainant off the bridge.

Four wrecking charges had been brought up from the magazines and placed in the surfboat now lowered to the rail, together with a long reel of wrecking cable, detonators, battery, and switch.

"Into the boat, boys—and you too, Professor," grunted Joe, with a sour glance at the scientist hovering near by.

We were lowered away from the *Mobican*, and in a few minutes had crossed the short breadth of sea between the cutter and the derelict. The *Ramon* was an ancient craft, wooden-built, and, according to her log, which had been left behind in the crew's haste to leave her, she was bound from Santos, Brazil, to St Johns, Newfoundland. She carried a cargo of lumber, which burden was probably responsible for her still being afloat.

Her foc'sle head and fore parts were one tangled maze of rigging, which had fallen from aloft on the shock of the collision. Of the foremast only the lower mast was still standing. Her topmast and topgallant masts, together with their yards and rigging, cluttered up her fore parts. The main-deck was awash under two feet of water, the only dry portions being the foc'sle head and poop.

"She's a mess all right," Kane summed up, after we had climbed aboard and stowed the wrecking mines on her poop.

"She won't be a mess for long," observed Joe, preparing the mines.

"D-do you mind if I go up f-forward and take a look around, Josephson?" Professor Heinkle inquired, gazing about him with great interest.

"Well, don't take all day," Joe grunted dourly. "We want

to get this job over with. Only thing you're liable to find on this packet is a few bedbugs in the foc'sle. And you'll get your feet wet," he pointed out, virtuously remembering Captain Clark's injunctions regarding the Professor.

Unlike the rest of us, Heinkle was not wearing sea-boots.

"I can take c-care of myself," he insisted ungraciously.

"Go ahead, then," muttered Joe, dropping a whispered imprecation from one corner of his mouth as the scientist shuffled off.

"While old Bubble-eyes is up forward let's see what's down in the cabin," Kane suggested.

"Precious little you'll find there," remarked Nelander. "I know these Portuguese. I served with a couple. They run their ships on a shoe-string. Hungriest packets I ever sailed on."

Three drowned pigs floated around on the main-deck in company with several bloated chickens. Portuguese ships carried livestock aboard for butchering during long voyages.

Kane soon returned from the cabin triumphantly exhibiting his spoils. Three bottles.

"One brandy and two wine," he announced happily.

"We won't drink 'em until the job is over," stated Joe, looking up from his task of inserting detonators into the wrecking-charges and fitting gaskets to ensure a watertight job. "T.N.T. and booze is a bad mixture."

One mine was now hauled below to the cabin. Two others were to be lowered into the holds. The fourth was to be placed in the forepeak below the foc'sle. They were connected together in series and were to be set off by the throwing of a switch from the surfboat, after we had pulled well to windward of the doomed vessel. The accumulated force of the combined charges could be well depended upon to complete the work of destruction unintentionally begun by the *Mauretania* earlier in the day.

We had just begun to lower the second mine into the hold when a fearsome shriek rose from the forepart of the vessel followed by an agonized appeal for help. Strange squeals and titterings mystified us.

"Help! Get off! Josephson! Kane! G-good God!"

Surfboat Joe gave vent to an exasperated oath.

"I knew that fish-wallopin' Jonah Heinkle would get into trouble. Probably fouled in the riggin' an' hung hisself. Kane, take two men up forward an' see what's up!"

Donovan and I splashed forward after our large shipmate across the flooded main-deck. We had almost reached the foc'sle door when Professor Heinkle burst into view struggling with a dark shape glued to his back.

"H-help!" panted the panic-stricken ichthyologist, catching sight of us. "Take him off!"

The 'him' to which the anguished Professor alluded was a grinning, chattering ape whose hairy arms were clutched about his unwilling mount's neck in affectionate if sudden devotion.

The sight was so ludicrous that, instead of rallying to the beleaguered scientist's assistance, we stopped in our tracks and roared with laughter. The Professor's protesting yells, the ape's loud chatterings, and our own guffaws drew forward the rest of the men we had left with Surfboat Joe.

"Josephson!" the Professor shouted furiously, trying to unfasten the stranglehold of the simian Old Man of the Sea. "S-stop laughing and g-get this brute off me!"

"Aye, aye," grinned Joe.

The ape was finally separated from the Professor at the cost of some of the latter's skin scuffed from his neck. We had our hands full in restraining the animal's magnetic urge for his deposed throne. To hold him where he could do no further mischief while we finished our work we secured him to the teak taffrail of the barquentine's poop, while Heinkle recovered by degrees from the effects of his introduction to the visitor from a warmer clime who had leaped from nowhere on to his back while he snooped around in the obscurity of the foc'sle.

This unanticipated addition to our duties aboard the Portuguese vessel consumed what little had been left of the day. We worked fast.

It was dark when we pulled away from the charged ship.

"Take it easy, boys!" said Joe from the sternsheets, paying out the wire as it unwound from the wrecking reel. "We don't want to part this cable."

We were now two hundred yards from the deserted *Ramon*.

"Oars!"

We rested. Joe connected the wire to the battery. Nothing remained now but to close the switch. Our elderly chief gunner's mate did so.

The surfboat trembled from the force of the explosion and rolled on the swell induced by the concussion of the mines, which had split the derelict's sides in twain. What was now left of the *Ramon* floated on the surface of the sea, flotsam and jetsam—splinters. The Coast Guard had removed another hazard to safe navigation.

We pulled back to the *Mobican* along the beam of her searchlight which was bent upon us. The Professor sat in the bow of the surfboat uneasily eyeing the irrepressible ape trussed beside Kane, who was handling the steering-oar in the sternsheets.

Captain Clark's voice hailed us from the bridge.

"What was the delay over there, Josephson?"

"A monkey got fouled in the works, sir," Joe shouted.

A pause . . . nothing to be heard but the sibilant lisp of the sea and the creak of our oars. Although it was difficult to see the captain's figure, I could feel his suspicious gaze fastened on us.

"Have you been drinking, Josephson?"

"No, sir!" Joe indignantly refuted.

"Come aboard," said Captain Clark. "I want to see you on the bridge. And the rest of you as well."

He looked at us closely when we presented ourselves but could discover no substantiation of his assumption in our appearance or demeanour. Professor Heinkle, edging far away from the ape we brought along to the captain for evidence, corroborated our version of the delay.

"H'mm. . . . As for the monkey," said Captain Clark, "I'll decide about him later. I'm not keen on having animals for pets aboard this ship."

Freed from his bonds, the new addition to the personnel of

the *Mobican* immediately made himself at home. He unhesitatingly accepted food from us, chattered in a very friendly manner, and showed a marked congeniality towards every one. Seafaring men are notoriously tender-hearted when it comes to pets aboard, and the crew of the *Mobican* was no exception.

Nelander, who had once been a circus hand, said that our new bandy-legged shipmate hailed originally from Africa and was of a species populating the famed Rock of Gibraltar. He was tailless and had flaming red buttocks. With the neat adaptability nautical life so unerringly inculcates in mariners, we called him simply, for want of a better name, the red-arsed ape. He soon learned to answer to that cognomen until later, finding out that Professor Heinkle's first name was Olaf, we dubbed him such.

Olaf showed an obvious preference for the scientist for quite a while. Perhaps his befogged simian reasoning suggested cause for gratitude since it was the ichthyologist whose acquaintance he had first made when his own masters had left him to his fate in their haste to abandon their sinking ship.

The Professor in no way reciprocated this attachment. He kept out of his namesake's path as much as he could. But this was difficult. Olaf would espy him from afar and make a beeline for him, scampering on all fours and ending in a flying leap for the scientist's back, pursuing him even down to the state-room he occupied in the wardroom.

This habit of Olaf's at first amused the officers until Lieutenant Blanton, coming off a mid-watch at four o'clock in the morning, found the ape stretched out asleep in his bunk. After indignantly chasing the usurper aft the horrified officer made an even more alarming discovery. Olaf's conceptions of sanitation were limited. After a heavy meal with the crew he was often a creature of impulse. With Olaf, impulse was synonymous with execution. When Lieutenant Blanton had changed the defiled sheets on his bunk he stormed into the helpless Heinkle's state-room and flatly informed him that the presence of his companion was no longer desired in the wardroom and most emphatically would not be tolerated.

"But he doesn't belong to me!" protested the harassed man

of science, awakened from a comfortable sleep by the fuming lieutenant. "I can't help it if he follows me round."

The officer expressed himself tersely and to the point and then returned to his bunk.

Olaf retired aft to spend the night with the crew.

Having been made to realize that he was *persona non grata* with the officers, Olaf transferred his allegiance to the more democratic environment which housed the crew. We induced the ship's tailor to subdue the flaunting effect of Olaf's flaming stern by clothing him in a miniature uniform. Thus attired, he soon became one with life aboard ship. He learned to fall in to daily quarters with us and even attempted to imitate the drills we performed, to the peril of discipline.

Olaf's innate artistic impulses manifested themselves in the disturbing habit he acquired of trying to festoon the ship with miles of hanging streamers. These latter were large rolls of toilet tissue he would pilfer from the lavatories and washrooms exclusively presided over by the *Mohican's* moneylender, Captain Milton. That worthy was often to be seen chasing Olaf all over the deck with a deck-scrubber in his infuriated grasp, while the chattering little mischief-maker shot hither and thither like an insane comet, fluttering his quickly unrolling contraband cargo of tissue-paper behind him.

He did much to enliven the dull days aboard.

When in the vicinity of the Cold Wall the fogs were very frequent. They rose up with the surprising rapidity only too typical of Grand Banks weather, and were due to the ceaseless battle for dominance between the warm Gulf Stream and the cold Arctic Labrador Current.

These thick banks of fog would completely enshroud the *Mohican*, hemming us in for days at a time. Eyes would be strained, nerves stretched taut. The hoarse blast of the cutter's deep-throated fog-whistle was ever a roaring, unnerving voice in our ears. The impenetrable dull white canopy tied over the sea played havoc with our dispositions. Ever present was the danger of collision with other ships or icebergs. Fog . . . fog . . . fog . . . confinement . . . intent, sustained watchfulness . . . the

ceaseless bellowing of the fog-signals—all made close shipmates sometimes snarl at each other. Tempers flared, fists struck. Strict disciplinary measures were exacted by stern officers.

So it was not altogether unexpected when blood ran along the ship's deck as two negro Mess attendants fell out one fog-bound morning after five days of close-packed strain. Both Afro-Americans had Gaelic names and came from Georgia. Kelly and Moore. The quarrel broke out in the galley.

"It's yo'-alls turn to wash 'em this mawnin'," insisted Kelly. "I washed 'em yes'erday."

Moore pointed out a fallacy in the reasoning.

"Ah's yo' senior, boy. Ah don't nohow feel like washin' 'em to-day."

"Yeah? Yo' is on'y a burr-haid niggah to me, black boy," returned the disdainful Kelly. "Is yo' gonna wash 'em dishes or is yo' ain't?"

"I ain't," declared Moore succinctly. "An' yo'-alls a blacker niggah 'an me, an' a countrified niggah too. Yo' ain't never worn no shoes till you jine up de service. Yous better unnerstan' Ah's a city niggah. Ah hails fum Savannah."

"Yeah?" retorted Kelly, stung, picking up a long knife and slashing viciously at his taunter, who retaliated vigorously with a sharp-edged meat-cleaver. "Maybe yo' is a Savannah niggah, an' back dere is where yo' is bound foh in a box if you messes wid me an' don't git up in de pantry an' fix 'em dishes."

Attracted by the altercation, gory threats, and sounds of conflict, the Master-at-arms arrived on the scene and discouraged Moore from finishing Kelly altogether by banging him resoundingly on the head with a brass fire-nozzle.

Dr Wilcoxon was none too sanguine about the fallen Kelly's chances of recovery.

"Looks like we may have to put him on ice before we get back to Halifax," he opined.

Seamen who die at sea are not buried there by the Coast Guard, which, in this, is unlike the Merchant Service. It is the custom to put their bodies into the refrigerator to preserve them until such time as the cutter makes the nearest port. Moore had

buried his meat-cleaver in Kelly's shoulder, severing an artery.

"Niggers have more lives than alley cats," Nelander consoled the sensitive Donovan, who swore he would not eat another piece of meat out of the refrigerator should Kelly succumb.

And in this instance the Dane was right. Kelly lived to be tried with Moore for felonious assault on each other some weeks later when both were fined a month's pay by a summary court.

"It was dat damn' ol' devil fog," asserted Moore contritely, the two negroes having once again become bosom friends. "Dat an' de damn' ol' whistle tootin' all de time!"

The fifteen-day patrol came to an end, and the day scheduled for the relief to be made broke clear and fine and remained so long enough for both the *Mohican* and the *Cherokee* to sight each other.

Professor Heinkle and the official Ice Observer were transferred to the relief ship. Both men would be at sea for the duration of the Ice Patrol, some four to five months. The *Mohican's* deck-force sped the Professor over to the *Cherokee* with a chorus of hearty if subdued curses, and life immediately became more enjoyable.

Four hours after we had been relieved by the *Cherokee* fog again swooped down on us, and the roaring fog-whistle reverberated in our ears for the duration of the run into Halifax. We reached Chebucto Light by midnight of the fourth day after relief, a day late. As it was too late to grant liberty, we dropped anchor in Halifax harbour. On the morrow we were to go alongside the Cable Company's wharf.

"Here's where we get a good night's sleep at last," Donovan sighed, after the *Mohican* anchored, "but I'll be hearing fog-signals for a week."

Vessels are not required to sound fog-signals on the ship's whistle when anchored in fog. Signals then are the rapid ringing of the ship's bell, a mere tinkle in comparison to the vibrating steam-siren.

The crew dropped off to sleep with a collective sigh of relief, only to be routed from their bunks at three o'clock in the morning.

One prolonged blast on the siren was the electrifying awakener. COLLISION!

No need to tell us what that blast meant! We had been run down in the fog!

The loud ringing of the general alarm system broke throughout the cutter—a hideous din of bells so startling as to bring a response from Davy Jones' locker itself. Next followed the loud notes of the bugle desperately sounding the call for collision drill.

"All the deck-force on deck!" The stentorian order swept through the ship. "Man the collision mat! Take stations for collision!"

We poured out on to the deck in our underwear, heavy sleep dispersed by alarm. Frantically we removed the heavy canvas collision mat from its securing lines, ready to be lowered overside to help staunch the flow of water into the ship where she had been struck.

"What part of her's been hit?" Kane demanded breathlessly of the boatswain, who came racing up from below in his pyjamas.

"I'll find out," he panted, making for the bridge.

"Sound the wells!" Captain Clark ordered the carpenter. "Let me know if she's making water! Quick, now!"

Pandemonium seemed to be loose on the *Mohican's* decks. The whole ship was aroused. Surfboat Joe and his assistants were standing by their flooding valves in various stages of undress ready to flood the magazines in which T.N.T., black and smokeless powder, and the other dangerous explosives were stored. Officers and men ran round the ship shouting and obeying orders. The thick fog puffed and billowed in concealing gusts, hid men from each other, and caused them to collide with gear and other human bodies. Above the shouts and yells the unyielding clamour of the alarm system added its piercing note of confusion to the scene. The Master-at-arms, whose duty it was when the ship's safety was threatened, dashed below to unlock the brig. He returned to the upper deck with the one prisoner it contained—Moore, the sophisticated Savannah negro who had worn shoes before he joined the service.

"God!" exclaimed the harassed Master-at-arms, becoming conscious of another responsibility. "I've forgotten Olaf!"

The ape's quarters was a length of chain attached to a stanchion on the lower berth-deck after nightly eight o'clock reports were made.

"Yes," shouted several concerned seamen. "Don't forget Olaf!"

Down below once more raced the Master-at-arms. He reappeared a few moments later with a troubled inquiry on his lips.

"Anybody here seen Olaf?"

"The hell with Olaf!" roared Iodine Mike, struggling up a hatch with the wounded negro, Kelly. "Give me a hand with this coon."

Where was the collision? No one seemed certain for all that the air was thick with orders.

"All hands will muster on the quarterdeck," was Captain Clark's edict when harried search failed to reveal any signs of collision.

In bedraggled array we complied with the command.

"If this is some one's idea of a joke," said the captain grimly, "he'll pay for it. Who pulled that blast on the siren—the collision signal?" he demanded sternly. "Who rang the general alarm? I want that man to step out of ranks."

Silence, uneasy and pregnant with direful possibilities.

"Every one of you," stated Captain Clark from between compressed lips, "will stay up here until I get to the bottom of this matter!"

Men stared dumbly at each other, freezing and shaking in the raw April cold which is Halifax's idea of spring.

Finally the reluctant admission from a sheepish Swede:

"I rang the general alarm, sir."

"You did, eh?" Our commander stepped closer to the man and bored him with a gimlet eye. "Why? Why did you ring the general alarm system, Nystrom?"

The man gulped nervously. "Because some one pulled a long blast on the siren soundin' the collision signal, sir. You see,"

he explained, "I was on anchor-watch an' makin' the rounds of the ship when I heard the siren go. So I rang the general alarm," he finished uneasily.

The captain transferred his gaze to our shivering ranks.

"Who sounded the long blast on the siren?" he demanded loudly.

"I dunno, sir," returned Nystrom. "Honest I dunno!"

"Remain where you are," the captain barked at him. Our commander let his cold eyes travel up and down our chilly lines. "I've had enough of this tomfoolery," he snapped. "Who was it that sounded the signal on the——"

Hoooo! Hoooo! Hoooo! Hoooo!

As if to mock him, as if to deride his determined inquiry, the resonant screeching of the siren broke on our ears. Captain Clark swung round with a triumphant shout.

"Well, whoever it is we've got him this time! Go up the port ladder of the bridge, Mr Stanley! I'll take the starboard ladder. Every one else, stand in ranks!"

Our teeth chattered, our knees knocked, our lips turned blue, our noses red. I sneezed.

"Master-at-arms!" came the captain's furious roar from the bridge.

"Yes, sir?"

"Bring two or three men up here with you and get this damned ape down off the stack! He's all tangled up with the whistle cords! I thought I told you to keep him chained up after dark?"

"He must've got loose, sir."

"Consider yourself on report for neglect of duty," snarled our disturbed commander. "And hurry up here!"

The dismayed Master-at-arms scurried up to the bridge muttering bitter remarks against both Olaf and Professor Heinkle, whom in some way he considered one of the motivating forces of his own misfortune in having been responsible for Olaf's presence aboard.

"Dismissed!" shouted the captain down to our thoroughly frozen ranks awaiting dispensation.

We made a dive for the berth-deck.

Six

WINTER IS A GRIM TYRANT IN NOVA SCOTIA, AND spring has a difficult time persuading his abdication.

It was snowing when we left the *Mohican* in search of those pleasures we expected of Halifax after a return from the sea.

Kane, Donovan, and I trudged our way through the light flurries down Barrington Street bound for Sticks' Place and some of the stuff that cheers.

"Seems colder here than out on patrol," commented Donovan, blowing on his stiffened fingers. "And April's almost gone, too."

"Cold all right," Kane agreed, with a grunt, "but it'll be nice an' cosy where we're goin'. A coupla tots of Sticks' rum will soon fix us up."

"Let's spend a respectable evening for once," I suggested, in a flash of original inspiration.

Kane laughed. "It'll be a novelty, anyway," he assented.

"Two or three drinks," I elaborated cheerfully, "a nice dinner at some Chink restaurant, a trip out to the hospital to see Preacher Mason, and back to the ship early."

"I'd prefer sleeping ashore," said Donovan. "I won't hear any fog-whistles, then."

A taxi drew level with us. A familiar face poked out through an open window.

"Want a ride, boys?" invited Surfboat Joe generously. "I suppose you're heading for Sticks' too. Jump in!"

We accepted the offer with pleasure and were soon deposited in front of our unofficial shore headquarters. The place was crowded and filling more every minute. We shouldered our way through the press and obtained a table, where we ordered drinks.

"Seen anythin' of Eskimo Marie?" Kane asked the waiter.

"She's out at the hospital," was the reply. "Goes there every afternoon to see some bloke who's off your ship."

"Well!" Kane beamed delightedly. "It shows her heart's in the right place."

"Don't you think we ought to pay Mason a visit ourselves?" I asked. "After this drink, I mean, of course."

Kane swallowed his rum. "Sure. Comin', Donovan?"

"You fellows go along," said the Irishman. "I'll come out later, perhaps. I want to stow away a few more drinks and thaw out."

It was still quite early when Kane and I arrived at the Victoria General Hospital.

"You may remain with Mr Mason until six o'clock," the nurse informed us as she led the way to our shipmate's room. "He mustn't be tired. He already has had a visitor this afternoon."

Preacher was propped up in bed, a white bandage swathing his head. On a table near him was a vase of fresh flowers and a large dish of assorted fruits. Eskimo Marie stood beside the bed buttoning her gloves.

"I must be going, Dick. Can't afford to be late for work."

She had not heard our quiet entrance. Dick? So that was Mason's first name. Christian names are rarely used aboard ship, and then only by old shipmates.

"Hello, Marie!" boomed Kane, in what he evidently mistook for a whisper suitable to the subdued hospital environment. "You too, Preacher!"

"Ginger!" Marie wheeled with a startled little gasp of delight. "Glad to see you back. Heard you had some unpleasant weather on the Banks."

"Wasn't so bad," said Kane. "Gosh, it's great to see you! How about a feed of chop suey before you go to work? Paul here can stay with Mason awhile. He wants to spend a quiet evenin', anyway."

"Well," said Marie dubiously, "we'll have to hurry, then." She shot a quick glance at the patient. "I promised Sticks to be back by seven. He's expecting a big crowd this evening."

"We've got a couple of hours yet," said Kane reassuringly. "I'll see you get back on time. How you feelin', Preacher? Bonzer?"

"Yes . . . yes, fine!" replied Mason, with a sickly smile, fastening a wistful look on Marie. "Thanks for coming to see me."

"That's all right," said Kane. "We were worried about you." He tucked his arm through Marie's, and drew her with him. "Come on. Let's eat!"

Marie's farewell glance at Mason was a little troubled, it seemed to me, but she offered no further objections to Kane. After telling the patient she would be back on the morrow she went out with my robust friend.

"How have they been treating you, Mason?" I asked, drawing a chair to the bedside and settling myself on it. "Get enough to eat?"

"Oh, yes! Can't kick about the chow. This is a good hospital."

"Glad to hear it. Your head was bashed up pretty bad, you know."

He nodded absently. "Yes. But that's all okay now. The Lord sure took care of me. I prayed very hard to recover," he told me shyly.

The convalescent before me was certainly an odd specimen to find aboard ship. His background had been rather unusual, too. Before joining the *Mohican* and the Coast Guard he had been a fisherman of Morehead City, North Carolina—had owned his own boat and made a fair living out of it. He had also been a solid pillar of one of the local Baptist churches, where, in the absence of the minister on occasion, he had often occupied the pulpit. His retreat from the sanctified environment of the church had been tragic.

As senior deacon of the congregation he had been deputizing for the absentee minister during one of the latter's frequent departures from the city. This time it was the clergyman's vacation. That individual had selected Wilmington to spend his two weeks of rest, a city from which Preacher Mason's bride of a year had come. At the time of the minister's vacation Mason's wife left for Wilmington, ostensibly to visit her parents.

A vague rumour reached Mason's ears. Although unwilling to credit the gossip, a nagging jealousy had flogged him to investigate for himself. He came across the pair in a hotel room together. Mason's vengeance as the wronged husband was brief but conclusive. Tried for the murder of the minister, he was

acquitted by a sympathetic jury on the plea of the unwritten law. He sold his boat and left for the West Coast. There he joined the Coast Guard.

"I wouldn't be in any too great a hurry to rejoin the *Mohican*, if I were you," I advised. "Better hang around here until you've made a complete recovery. The last patrol was a nasty one. No end of dirty weather and fog."

Mason's look wandered from me. His lips were caught reflectively between his teeth.

"Bart," he said, seeming strangely uneasy, "do you mind if I ask you something?"

"No, of course not. What?"

"It—it's rather personal."

"Who cares?"

"It's about Kane and—and—Marie," he confessed slowly. "Do you think there's anything much between 'em—I mean—that is——" He drew a quiet breath. "Do you think they really care for each other?"

"Not in the way you seem to be thinking. I've never known Kane to be in love, if that's what you mean. And I've known him a long time now. They're just a sailor and his sweetheart."

Mason appeared relieved. "I'm glad to know that," he said happily. "You know, Marie's a swell girl—she rates something more than being only a sailor's plaything. She would make a man a good wife."

"Maybe she would," I agreed. "But do you mind if I give you what I think is a good piece of advice?"

"No."

"Marie happens to be Kane's particular interest here in Halifax. Both of them have much in common which you have not with either. After July we'll be gone from Halifax back to the States. New sweethearts. Up anchor—good-bye, girls; drop anchor—hello, ladies. Forget it, Mason, and leave them alone."

"But they're not married, Bart," he insisted quietly.

"Well, not churched . . . yes. But Kane's kicking in a share towards the upkeep of Marie's apartment——"

Mason closed his eyes, and asked with an apparent effort:

"Do you mean to say they—they—sleep together?"

"What do you think?"

"I don't know—I don't want to think about—to believe it," he returned painfully.

"You don't have to. Better forget about the whole business and just be thankful you're alive and kicking. After all, what Kane and Marie do is their affair, not ours."

The same nurse who had ushered Kane and me in now came to warn me it was time for me to leave.

"Good-bye, Bart," said Preacher Mason. "Mighty glad you and Kane dropped in to see me."

"Don't mention it. I'll be seeing you soon again."

While riding in the tram down town my mind was dwelling on Mason's obvious interest in Marie, a situation which on the surface, considering the principals, seemed ludicrous. Kane would be amused if I told him. But I decided against letting him know. Mason was undoubtedly a little of a crank. He had had a bad head wound, and the possibility was there to consider that he might be still suffering from some of the effects. Matters, I reasoned, would undoubtedly take care of themselves to the satisfaction of all concerned.

A sea-food restaurant in Hollis Street reminded me I had not eaten. For once I determined that a quiet evening should be mine. It was all right for such vigorous constitutions as the impregnable Kane and the stalwart Nelander to fling themselves into the swirling well of meaty delights and emerge with unadulterated vitality, but it was somewhat of an effort for me to maintain the same unresilient composure.

I had been acting the irresponsible for so long that I thought it might prove a pleasant experience to step out of character and taste the singular (for me) delights of comparative respectability.

I had hardly seated myself and ordered the dish most sailors just returned from the sea appear to relish—ham and eggs—when a familiar figure slid into the restaurant, and, spying me, sat down beside me at the table.

"Hello, Bart," said Captain Milton, the Midas of the *Mobican*. "Goin' out for a fling to-night?"

"Not to-night. I'm taking a lesson from your book for once."

"It's about time you eased up. If I flew around like some of you mugs I'd always be broke too."

"No doubt."

"I'm savin' me dough," Milton declared. "When me time's up I'll have enough put by to buy a farm I've got me eye on in Virginia—a tobacco farm. No girls an' booze for me. You guys can have the good times—just so long as you pay me back the dough I let you have. Wanna know somethin'?" He grinned at me in parsimonious triumph. "I took in almost three hundred smackers to-day in interest alone!"

"You should buy a pawnshop, not a farm, Captain."

"Maybe I will," he chuckled drily, "maybe I will!"

"Do you mind if I sit at your table, sailor?" inquired a dulcet feminine voice. I looked up over a forkful of wedded ham and egg poised half-way to my mouth. A pleasant enough face met my eyes—good teeth, bright eyes, even though burdened with a heavy application of mascara.

"Sit down," I invited.

"My name's Hattie," said the newcomer, accepting my suggestion. "French Hattie, they call me."

"Oh, yes. I remember you now," I told her. "You hang around Sticks' Place a lot, don't you?" She nodded. I told her my name.

Captain Milton nudged me. I determined to ignore his desire for an introduction for all his vaunted principles of misogyny.

"Why do they call you French Hattie?" I asked curiously.

"My last husband was a frog," she replied. "He was a fisherman off the Banks, but got lost in a fog in a dory one morning."

"Lonesome now, eh?"

"You said it, boy. I've got to take care of myself now."

Hattie seemed fruitfully fashioned by nature for that purpose. Filled with ham and eggs and a couple of cups of coffee, I felt my better earlier impulses fading with little struggle.

"Anything on to-night, Hattie?"

"I was thinking of takin' a run down to Sticks' and seeing what the chances were of makin' a pick-up for the night," she admitted frankly. "Are you dated up yet?"

"No."

"Well," returned Hattie, with a fine, efficient disregard for formality, "how about it?"

"How much do you charge?"

"Ten dollars for the night."

Sticks' Place was, as usual, crowded when I arrived with Hattie. I left Captain Milton behind in the restaurant. The centre of attraction was a table at which sat four men. It was a noisy and profane gathering engrossed in some spirited negotiation, the few words which I caught not sounding very enlightening.

"I've got five dollars that says the Army wins!" declared a loud voice from the press of uniformed men around the table.

"Ten dollars on the Coast Guard!" was another shout.

"My money's on the Royal Navy!"

"Ten dollars at any odds on the Canadian Navy!"

"What's going on, Paddy?" I inquired of Donovan, an interested spectator.

"A tournament," he said. "It's a four-sided affair with Sergeant McGregor, of the Royal Canadian Regiment, Stoker Simmons, of the Royal Navy, Signalman Jennings, of the Canadian Navy, and Kane, upholding the honour of the United States and the Coast Guard!"

Donovan had named the four champion drinkers of their respective services, names to be spoken in awe.

"We've all bet our shirts on Kane," confided the Irishman. "If he loses we're sunk!"

"Don't worry about Kane losing," I encouraged him. "He'll drink them all under the table before the evening's up."

"I hope so."

"Me too," Surfboat Joe chimed in, a bevy of three girls clinging to the insatiable satyr. "I've bet a hundred bucks on him."

The rules laid down for this international competition were

few and definite. A five-minute interval was permitted between drinks. The ammunition of combat was to be black rum, the fiery and devastating product of hot Jamaica plantations.

My memory went back to the drinking bout waged between Nelander, Sergeant Hawkins, Kane, and myself on the night of our first arrival in Halifax. But that had been the feeble pretensions of three comparative amateurs pitted against a Titan professional, and could not compare in any way to this awesome tussle of the tops in bibulants.

The battle had been in progress for an hour when I arrived on the scene with my lady of the evening. Twelve tots of rum had already been swigged. Yet there were no signs of weakening upon the part of any of the magnificent contestants. They sat in a stolid circle about the table eyeing each other grimly, solemnly downing their drinks at the staccato commands of a timekeeper, who at the end of the stipulated five-minute interval between drinks would cry, "Down the hatch!"

The Coast Guard had patriotically backed Kane to a man. Our shipmate was up against formidable opposition this time. The flower of Halifax's quaffers, the cream of the town's tipplers, were ranged in mighty and impressive array against him.

The representative of the Royal Navy, Stoker Simmons, was the first to show signs of weakening to the loud-voiced dismay of his disappointed adherents.

"Gorblimey, Simmons, buck up!" they urged.

"Don't let the Royal Navy down, you blinkin' milksop!"

"'Ere, now, Simmons me boy, don't toss in the bloomin' sponge!"

The valiant gladiator glanced round at his hortative supporters with rapidly glazing eyes.

"Me 'at's still in th' bleedin' ring!" he announced, with befuddled truculency, giving vent to an enormous hiccup which seemed in danger of lifting off the top of his shaven head. And, with that indomitable courage, that magnificent fortitude, which has helped to raise the British Empire to her epic sway of the seven seas, he added, full of superb recklessness and bravery, "Fill 'er hup!"

"One more drink and it'll be good-night nurse for the Limey," predicted Nelander knowingly.

Holding the fifteenth tot of black rum to his lips, Stoker Simmons awaited the timekeeper's signal.

"Down the hatch!"

And down it went, likewise Stoker Simmons.

There was a loud groan of lamentation from the bilked stoker's partisans as the referee cried, "Carry him out! Throw him in the morgue. The Royal Navy will pay its bets! Round sixteen comin' up!"

Disgruntled shipmates and disappointed gamblers carried the unconscious Simmons from the scene of his glorious defeat.

"Down the hatch!"

Signalman Jennings, of the Canadian Navy, had put everything he had into the seventeenth tot. Now he sat in his chair looking like the mummified figure of Rameses II I had once seen in an Egyptian museum, with much the same colour.

"It's a bad night for the Navy," murmured a Canadian soldier standing alongside me, as we watched Signalman Jennings weave slowly back and forth, like some enchanted serpent on sunny Nile shores to the hypnotizing tune of an unseen fakir's pipings, and then slip gently, gracefully, in the same mesmerized tempo, off his chair and on to the floor. "Looks like Sergeant McGregor's comin' off top dog."

"Don't be too sure about that," I said. "Our man's still on deck."

"Betcha fifteen dollars McGregor sinks him," taunted the soldier. "Money talks, you know."

I wasn't on very good speaking terms with it, and if I lost the bet it looked as if I might have to go back to my original plan of a respectable evening, for I doubted if French Hattie would extend credit. But could I let a friend and shipmate down?

"I'll take the bet," I said.

The two apparent invincibles, Ginger Kane, representing the Coast Guard, and Sergeant McGregor, representing the Royal Canadian Regiment, sat opposite each other, neither showing any marked effects of battle up to this moment.

"Good work, Kane!" shouted the *Mobican's* blue-clad contingent.

"Don't let the Coast Guard down!"

"Remember our motto—*Semper paratus!*"

And Sergeant McGregor's excited and loyal friends:

"Don't disappoint 'Is Majesty!"

"It's for the glory of the regiment!"

As if to buoy our gallant representative, Surfboat Joe delegated Nelander to go in a taxi down to the *Mobican* and return with our mascot Olaf. Discovering our intention, and not to be outdone, one of the soldiers made a hasty trip to the Citadel and returned with their regimental mascot, the liquor-lapping canine, Whisky, who, when I had seen him last, was enjoying his own particular brand of delirium tremens.

Olaf was seated in a chair beside Kane. Whisky was deposited at Sergeant McGregor's elbow. Sailors, soldiers, and girls surrounded the scene of conflict three and four deep. The place was filled with tobacco smoke, the fumes of beer, rum, whisky, and other assorted stimulants. Enthusiasm and excitement reached a high pitch. Whisky added his deep, staccato voice to the proceedings. Olaf chattered and squealed and thumped on the table with his long arms.

The two new guests were thoughtfully supplied by a donation from the proprietor, Sticks, himself. Whisky received his customary saucer of liquor, while Olaf, whose tastes seemed more plebeian, was furnished with a stein of beer, which he attacked with apparent relish. He was attired in his newly tailored dress-blues and looked natty and extremely well turned out—a tribute to the skill of the *Mobican's* tailor. Whisky, in addition to having the regimental insignias of the R.C.R.'s stamped on his collar, also wore a blanket on his back on which was portrayed the crest of the regiment and motto.

The contest was now reaching its climax. Both participants began to show signs of the ordeal. Perspiration stood out in thick globules on their brows. Their fingers were stiff and fumbling as they reached for their glasses.

"It can't last much longer," said Donovan. "One of them, or both, is bound to crack!"

Sergeant McGregor heaved from the effects of the chaos within his mighty bosom and choked over his drink, which, it seemed, he could not down. He gazed at the inexorable referee in glassy-eyed appeal, his whole frame jerking with spasms, as he opened and closed his mouth like a strangling fish.

Kane had already swallowed his drink and clung on to the edge of the table for support.

But there was no answering sympathy in the stony look which the indomitable referee bestowed on the beseeching McGregor. He was a Royal Marine corporal who had been selected to officiate at this epic combat because of the fact that his own organization was not represented and he could therefore be depended upon to render impartial and unbiased decision.

"Drink up, sergeant!" he ordered curtly. "You're slippin' behind, you know. The Coast Guard's one drink up on you now."

"Come on, Mac!" cried his sympathizers, sensing defeat. "Down the hatch with her!"

"Woof!" Whisky threw in hoarse encouragement as well in his deep baritone. "Woof!"

Sergeant McGregor, transfixed and rapidly petrifying, went through the motions of drinking, in an effort to precede complete solidification.

"You've got one minute to down that drink," the referee told him severely, "or be counted out."

Sergeant McGregor made the supreme effort. He carried the glass to his lips again, opened his mouth, and trusted to the co-operation of gravity. But even gravity appeared to fail him. He sputtered out the rum, spraying it all over his canine companion at the table next to him.

"The Coast Guard wins!" shouted the referee above the bedlam of triumphant shouts and roars and shrill feminine screams of delight. "Settle all bets!"

Kane was unable to stand and acknowledge the plaudits of his admirers. This did not deter them from hoisting him to their shoulders to parade him round the room in a march of triumph, to the vivacious music of *Madelon*, supplied by the orchestra.

Surfboat Joe led the celebrants, Olaf walking hand-in-hand with him.

Sergeant McGregor was removed to the morgue to sleep off his coma. The honour of his regiment, however, was still nailed like some proud but tattered banner to a bullet-splintered mast, for noisily lapping the spilled contents of the vanquished sergeant's glass of rum was Whisky, regimental mascot.

French Hattie took me to a small hotel down in Water Street upon our departure from Sticks' noisy confines. It was a rat-ridden, weather-beaten edifice not far from the wharf where the *Mohican* was berthed. The sad-faced clerk hovering over his stained desk asked no questions. There was a singularly nautical atmosphere about the register which was given me to sign if the names already there were suggestive of anything:

Mr and Mrs Davy Jones
Mr and Mrs Neptunus Rex
Mr and Mrs W. T. Door
W. T. Hatch and Wife
Mr and Mrs Charley Noble.

Watertight Door and missus, Watertight Hatch and frau, Mr Charley Noble, alias the galley smoke-stack, and wife, and the other names plainly told me that several of my shipmates and their escorts of the evening were already checked in.

The Mariner's Arms, as the hotel designated itself, with the unconscious suggestion of *un bon mot*, would hardly have been included in any sightseer's guide to the city. It was old and dirty, with little to commend it to a patron seeking any other facility than convenience. The sanitary utilities were limited, with a conspicuous lack of water-closets in the small, dingy, whitewashed rooms. A chagrined management had attempted to minimize the attendant discomforts of this architectural oversight by the substitution of old-fashioned chamber-pots and slop-pails. It was one of these latter objects, playing a prominent rôle during the course of the evening, which seriously undermined the night's tranquillity.

While French Hattie was diligently searching the rickety iron

bed for the uninvited presence of bugs and I was making myself comfortable we heard a loud, joyous whoop, followed immediately by a loud crash of breaking china in the street below. An outraged howl split the night.

"I got'm all right!" exclaimed a triumphant voice from the room adjoining ours. "Won't he smell sweet now, the snoopin' ol' flat-foot!"

A hurried glance into the street through a rent in the blind informed us of the nature of the disturbance. One of my shipmates, a fellow-guest of the Mariner's Arms, had observed a policeman directly below his window. With that robust *bonhomie* of the sea, stimulated to an eruptive degree by a night of liquored roistering, he had emptied the contents of one of the chamber-pots over the minion of the law, and then, intentionally or accidentally, had dropped the slop-pail as well.

It wasn't long before the police of Halifax descended in liberal numbers on the Mariner's Arms.

Doors were rudely thrown open accompanied by gruff commands of "You've got two minutes to dress! Get a move on now!"

Two black marias were soon at the door to receive a motley gathering of the hotel's guests in all manner of costume. Male and female were segregated and deposited in the respective vehicles.

French Hattie was philosophic about it.

"Just another pinch. They'll plaster us all with a few dollars' fine and let it go at that. See you in court in the morning." She stepped into her carriage while the police hustled me in to mine.

I recognized my shipmates filling up the police wagon.

"What brainless ape dumped that muck over the copper?" hissed an enraged latecomer as he was pushed among us by the none too gentle arms of the police. It was Nelander, who had signed the register of the hotel as Mr Denmark and wife after his native country.

The culprit declared his identity with a snigger.

"I thought he needed a bath." He was a fat, greasy-looking

Norwegian named Jorgenson, but more familiarly known to the ship as Ali Baba because of his weakness for pilfering canned fruits, bacon, eggs, and other supplies from the store-room of the *Mohican*, of which he was keeper, and selling them to us at a nice profit.

"You sure got us in a fine pickle!" exclaimed Chile Smythe indignantly. "It cost me ten bucks to pay my dame off an' the cops crash in before delivery."

The caravan with its male and female hoodlums got under way and shortly after rolled to a stop in front of Halifax's police station.

"Ladies first," mocked one of our captors, turning the girls over to waiting, brawny-armed policewomen.

"And now will the gentlemen please be so kind as to step forth?" jeered a detective.

Inside we were asked our names by the desk sergeant, who thoughtfully warned us that anything we said could be used against us. That formality over, we were lodged in cells to await trial in the morning.

There was little sleep for anybody that night, except for the cause of our misfortunes, Ali Baba, who slept the sleep of the innocent and didn't care who heard him. A few cells away a bibulous lunatic discoursed furiously with a species of indigo zebra. Other drunks and boisterous souls were flung into cells during the course of the hectic night, adding their opinions and remarks to the alcoholic bedlam that prevailed.

I was glad when the first grey stabs of a murky dawn stole through the barred windows. Breakfast was served—an uninspired bowl of porridge, washed down with a mug of black, unsweetened coffee.

Two hours later we filed into the court-room and took our seats in the prisoner's dock.

The frosty-eyed magistrate, obviously dyspeptic and unhappily married, to judge from his misanthropic, dour aspect, opened the trial with a prayer. Then he intoned the charge against those of us who had been picked up in the raid on the Mariner's Arms for indiscretion with the person of an officer of the law, false

registration, and the destruction of a policeman's uniform. We were to be tried in pairs.

"Mr and Mrs Davy Jones!"

"Yes, your worship!" acknowledged the two, the man a fireman from the *Mobican*.

"What is your religion, Mr Jones?" inquired the magistrate.

The fireman pondered. "Religion?"

"Come, come, my man!" snapped the Bench. "Surely you know what your religion is?"

"Well," Mr Davy Jones returned, "I used to attend the Holy Roller meetin's down south in Georgia. Guess you'd call me a Shoutin' Baptist. Me old man——"

A roar went up from the spectators. The magistrate pounded his gavel sternly.

"Order! Order! Any more of this and I'll declare you all in contempt of court!"

The offended Bench bestowed a look on the fireman which did not augur well, then turned its attention to the lady.

"And your religion, Mrs Jones?" he asked.

"Church of England, your worship," she replied unhesitatingly.

The magistrate frowned. "The last time you appeared before me," he said severely, "your name was Miss Johnson and you professed an affiliation with the Salvation Army."

"Yes, your worship!" Mrs Jones meekly acknowledged.

"And before that," pursued the grim, relentless Bench, "you were Mrs Pritchard and gave your religion as Methodist. Mr and Mrs Davy Jones, do you possess a marriage certificate?"

"We was married but not church'd," Mr Davy Jones sought to explain. Another gust of laughter swept the court-room.

"For that remark," snapped the magistrate, "I will fine you five dollars for contempt of court. Now answer the question."

"I guess we ain't really spliced, if that's what you mean, your worship," admitted Mr Jones.

"Then you plead guilty to false registration?"

Mr. Jones sighed heavily. "Yes, your worship."

"What do you know about the wilful destruction of Constable McCarthy's uniform?"

"Constable McCarthy's uniform?"

"Yes. The serious matter of a pail of filthy water being thrown from a hotel window!"

"Nuttin', your worship!" Mr Jones disavowed emphatically. "You see, our room had a harbour view, so it couldn't have been us. Some of the boys think Ali Baba messed things up——"

"An Arabian?" queried the magistrate, wrinkling his brows.

"No," said Mr Jones. "Just a greasy squarehead—a Norwegian. We just call him Ali Baba on account of he hooks chow from the store-room and peddles it to us."

"So it is your surmise that the aforementioned Ali Baba was responsible for the destruction of Constable McCarthy's uniform?"

"Yeah," said Mr Jones. "I'll say!"

The Bench bent a look of positive antipathy on the uncomfortable prisoner in the dock. Ali Baba squirmed uneasily in his chair next to Chile Smythe and myself and threatened in a loud stage-whisper, "That squealin' stool pigeon! Just wait till I get back to the ship!"

Chile kicked him viciously on the shin and muttered, "You'll do nothin', you greaseball. You got us into this damned mix-up an' you owe me ten bucks."

"Me owe you ten bucks?" Ali Baba looked very much surprised. "What for?"

"On account of I paid for somethin' I didn't get last night because of them cops you brought in on us. An' I ain't gonna let it cost us nothin' more. When you go up there you'll plead guilty for dumpin' that dirty water over the cop, or else——"

"Silence!" ordered the magistrate, then intoned, "Mr Davy Jones, I fine you ten dollars for false registration, plus costs, fifteen dollars *in toto*."

The sentence of all the male defendants was identical with the exception of Ali Baba Jorgenson, who in addition to his fine was ordered to defray the cost of a new uniform, overcoat, and cap for the violated Constable McCarthy, a sum amounting to a hundred dollars.

Of our companions a medical examination was ordered and some were ordered to be confined in institutions until their

condition warranted discharge. After this they were to be on probation, under obligation to report to the probation officer for a period of twelve months.

"There ain't nothing the matter with me," French Hattie hastily whispered to me as she was being led away. "I'll be seeing you!" She gave me a George Street address.

We returned to the *Mohican* two hours late. Ten of us faced another disciplinary hearing, but Captain Clark proved lenient.

"You men have already been punished enough under the circumstances, and while you are guilty of the grave charge of being absent without leave and should receive commensurate discipline I will dismiss you with a warning. But don't let this happen again."

Much to my surprise I was approached by Captain Milton later in the day, a smile of what must have passed in his penny-pinching conception as one of ingratiating on his face.

"Say, Bart," he remarked, "that was a good-looker I saw with you last night."

"She was all right," I admitted, puzzled at this social attitude on the part of the moneylender.

"She didn't get pulled in on that raid with you and the others, did she?" he pursued.

"Why?"

"Well, she didn't look like the rest of the sluts who hang out with sailors," said Milton. "She looked like a decent dame."

Captain's Milton opinion of French Hattie was one hundred per cent. wrong. I wondered at his naïveté, and put it down to his lack of familiarity with women.

"That talk about ten dollars for the night—that wasn't on the level, was it? Just a joke, huh?"

"Yes," I said, surrendering to some obscure impulse. "Just a joke. She isn't that type. I was with another dame I got at Sticks' Place when I was arrested."

"I thought so," Milton nodded. "I don't have much to do with janes, but I know a good one when I see her, an' she's too good to waste her time on a bum like you. Why didn't you introduce me last night?" he asked reproachfully.

"Didn't think of it."

"Well, look," he said. "You fix me up a' introduction. I could make it worth your while, you know. Ten bucks if you fix it proper."

I looked pained. "Do you take me for a pimp?" I demanded. "Find your own dames."

"Fifteen bucks, Bart," he persuaded. "Fifteen. Just for a proper introduction. Be a sport," he urged. "Think of the fifteen bucks."

I ruminated. "I've never known you to go out with a girl before, Captain. What makes you go for this one?"

Milton's sharp, thin face became a bit moony.

"It ain't that I don't like to go out with dames," he confessed confidentially. "I do, just as much as any other guy. But you got to spend dough on harlots an' I'm tryin' to save mine. That's why I'd like to meet a decent dame. One I could take out to the movies, maybe, an' feed with a little chow once in a while. Fact is," he sighed, "I'm a lonely guy at times. That's what makes me want to meet a girl like you was eatin' chow with the other night."

"I didn't know you felt that way about things, Captain," I sympathized. "Yes, I know what it is to be lonely too. Now, I can't promise you anything definitely, for although Hattie can take a rough joke now and then, she's a decent girl. This will take finesse to build you up right for her."

"Take who?"

"Skill."

"Oh!"

"But if you make it twenty-five bucks I'll see what I can do."

Milton wrestled with his thoughts, then blurted out quickly before he could change his mind, "You're a real shipmate, Bart! Here." He pressed ten dollars on me. "I'll give you the other fifteen when you knock me down to her."

I confided Milton's singular sentiments to Kane and Donovan. The former suggested that a council of war should be held in Eskimo Marie's apartment and that lady herself should be included. It seemed a golden opportunity to return interest to

Milton in other than legal tender. So we went to Marie's apartment and tried to devise a snare for the moneylender.

"In the meanwhile," Kane warned, "let's keep our mouths shut. We don't want the big fish to know he's already as good as hooked."

Our first night in port had claimed other victims too. Conspicuous among them was our elderly Lothario, Surfboat Joe. His sad tale was one of robbery which had followed a private celebration on the heels of Kane's victorious combat in the four-sided rum duel in Sticks' Place.

"I was rolled of every dime I had," he lamented. "Includin' the hundred bucks I won on Kane."

"Who rolled you?" Donovan inquired. "Some beach-comber?"

"A dame!" snorted Joe. "When I woke up in a hotel the mornin' after, I was picked clean as a whistle. An' the hell of it," declared Joe helplessly, "I don't know which scupper done it."

"That should be easy. Get the one you were out with and put it up to her."

The Chief Gunner's Mate scratched his thinning, greying hair. "Yeah, that's all right, but there was five of 'em."

"Five!" We gazed at him with new respect.

"I invited 'em to drink with me, an' that's the last I remember," said Joe, then added meaningfully, "I'll even up with those skirts. They can't do this to me an' get away with it. They're up at Sticks' every night. Come up to-night an' see some fun."

His promise was no idle one. When we strolled into Sticks' Place that evening we immediately saw Joe surrounded by five young ladies, all habitués of the environment.

"Well, I'll be damned!" Kane exclaimed. "The old devil never seems to learn. Here he is tangled up with another crowd of dingbats—probably the same mob what rolled him the other night."

"He's in his second childhood," Donovan surmised. "Just reaching the adolescent stage. After all," he shrugged, "what if he does get rolled? He brings it on himself, and he makes three times the money we do."

Joe seemed bent on repeating his earlier folly. We saw him making his way upstairs to one of Sticks' private rooms followed by the five young harpies.

"Shall we stop him?" I asked. "They'll take him over again."

"Let him rip," Kane grunted. "If they don't, somebody else will."

We sipped our drinks and listened to Eskimo Marie sing a number. But she was not to finish her song. Vague screams issued from upstairs to grow louder and louder until our eardrums rattled. Five pallid women lurched drunkenly down the stairs clutching their stomachs, three of them retching violently.

"I'm poisoned! My stummick! Get a doctor!" moaned the other two. In anguished disorder they piled into the ladies' room.

In a short while Surfboat Joe walked sedately down from upstairs, a pleased smile on his rugged old face.

"What the hell did you do?" demanded Kane.

"I couldn't find out which of 'em rolled me," said Joe, "so I decided to give 'em all the works. They'll think twice before they roll another sailor." He grinned delightedly at the thought of his own ingenuity. "I Micky-Finned 'em!"

Micky Finn . . . a potent purgative powder, slipped surreptitiously into a glass of liquor.

To the ladies!

Seven

I'VE KNOWN HATTIE SURDEZ FOR THE LAST TWO years," said Eskimo Marie. Kane, Donovan, and myself sat in her apartment. "The poor kid has had one streak of bad luck after another. She could use a few dollars all right. Getting picked up the other night won't help her any. She'll have to watch her step from now on and report to the probation officer once a week. One more pinch and they'll put her away for a stretch."

The glowing coke fire gave the little apartment a snug, cosy

air. We warmed our limbs gratefully in front of it after having trudged through ankle-deep snow to get there.

"I always did think the big chump was an easy mark for the right girl," said Kane, "for all he was actin' like women had a nasty smell for him. But do you think this French Hattie is the right one for the job, Marie? Hookin' him is one thing, landin' him another."

"Hattie's the girl for you, Ginger."

"Suppose I run over and bring her back with me," I offered. "Marie may be able to give her a few pointers."

"Good ideal!" the woman approved. "I've still got an hour before I'm due at Sticks'. I'll be glad to do anything to help you boys out."

French Hattie lived over in George Street, only a few blocks away. It did not take me more than five minutes to present myself at the door of the house, where I was examined by a suspicious landlady. I was obviously not a very welcome caller.

"Young man, I'll give yer to understand that I'm runnin' a respectable 'ouse, and not a moll-shop."

"What makes you think I entertained the latter impression?" I asked, somewhat nettled.

"If yer'll give me a chance to get a word in edgewise an' let me finish wot I was about ter say yer'll know very well," she told me coldly. "I don't like to 'ave sailors 'angin' around my door. They gives a place a bad name. I'll tell 'Attie yer waitin' for 'er, but don't yer ever come round inquirin' for 'er or any other girl wot rooms with me again."

The door was closed sharply in my face, and I was left to cool my heels. It appeared that the unamiable landlady had had her troubles with sailors before.

French Hattie soon put in an appearance.

"A little early, aren't you?" she said, as she slipped out of the door, softly closing it behind her.

"Yes. But I'd like you to come over to Marie's place for a while before we go to meet Milton."

"It was nice of you to think of doin' me such a good turn," said Hattie gratefully, as we walked through the snow-carpeted

streets. "I need some money badly. Two weeks behind with my rent an' old mother Jenkins threatenin' to throw me out if I don't cough up. Have I ever seen this guy you want me to play up to?"

"Yes. Remember two nights ago in the sea-food restaurant where we met? He was sitting near us."

Hattie looked at me in dismay. "You don't mean that awful ugly little weasel?"

"He's not much to look at," I admitted, "but he has other attractions you will find appealing, Hattie. Money. And I see no reason why you shouldn't get some of it, if things go the way we hope," I encouraged her.

"I'd have a nightmare sleepin' with a guy like that," said Hattie, with æsthetic repugnancy. "Did he know I was picked up in that raid the other night?"

"No. He thinks you're a real nice girl. He doesn't know much about women."

"Well, I'll do my best," promised Hattie bravely. "When do I meet him?"

"At seven-thirty in the Victory Chop Suey joint down on Barrington Street. And no joke, Hattie, he's pretty much gone on you."

The others were having supper when we joined them. We did not partake, for we had an engagement with the romantic Shylock of the *Mohican* for that purpose.

Eskimo Marie plunged into our conspiracy with enthusiasm, and even went so far as to lend French Hattie her new dress and coat to substitute for the clothes the latter was wearing, which were somewhat the worse for wear.

"And listen," Marie continued instruction, "you've got to play innocent with that bird. If he suggests a room later on in the evening, tell him nothing doing—that you're not that kind of a girl."

"But suppose he makes it worth my while?" asked Hattie, a little disappointed. "It's all right for you to talk, havin' a steady job an' all, but I'm already behind with my room rent and haven't got a dollar to my name."

"You've got to take that line," Marie insisted. "Because if you give in for the pennies you're going to lose out on the dollars."

"Is he dumb enough to fall for the wheeze?" Hattie asked dubiously.

"He's dumb enough where dames are concerned," said Kane. "We've never known him to go out with one before or even be interested."

"But what if he asks me what I'm doin' in Halifax and where I live?" persisted the pupil anxiously.

"Tell him," Marie reflected, "that you're from the country—down Truro way. You couldn't stand life on the farm, and you came to the city in the hope of finding a job, and you're staying at the Y.W.C.A."

"Now that's settled," said Donovan, pouring out five measures of rum. "Let's drink to Cinderella and her Prince Charming."

Captain Milton was impatiently waiting for Hattie and myself in the Victory Café. He had thoughtfully reserved a booth to afford us a greater degree of privacy and greeted me with a pleased smile when I deferentially led Hattie into the curtained cubicle.

"Arthur," I said, addressing him by his Christian name, "this is Miss Hattie Surdez from Truro."

The moneylender shifted his beaming gaze to Hattie. In Eskimo Marie's borrowed coat and dress she looked quite demure and fresh.

"Pleased to meet yer, Miss Surdez," said Milton awkwardly. "Bart was tellin' me about you. Sit down and we'll have a feed of chop suey. Waiter!"

The white-jacketed Chinese took our orders. As far as Milton was concerned I had become absorbed by one of the café's inanimate objects of ornament. He had eyes only for Hattie.

"Mind if I calls you Hattie?" he asked timidly.

"If you let me call you Arthur," returned the lady coyly.

Milton blushed with delight. "So you're from the country, huh? What do you think of Halifax?" he asked, and added anxiously, "And sailors?"

"I haven't been here very long," Hattie staunchly lied. "And

as for sailors——” She lowered her eyes to the table-top. “I don’t know yet. You see, you and Paul Bart are the only two sailors I’ve ever met.”

“Don’t you believe everything you hear about sailors,” Milton urged. “They’re just like folks ashore.” He flicked a dubious glance at me. “Some bad, some good.”

The meal was a lavish one. For once Captain Milton appeared not to be thinking of cost to himself.

“Eat up!” he commanded Hattie, with inelegant but sincere hospitality. “There’s plenty more where this come from.”

“I do like chop suey,” Hattie confided between mouthfuls. “They never serve anythin’ like this up in the cafeteria in the Y.W.C.A.”

Over the coffee I made a prearranged proposition.

“Arthur, would you mind showing Hattie around this evening? I’d join you, but I’ve offered to stand anchor-watch for another guy and I’ve got to get back to the *Mohican* to stand it.”

“Why, sure, Bart,” declared Milton, heartily. “Be glad to—if it’ll be okay with Hattie.” His small, beady eyes suffused with the first romantic glow they probably had ever known.

“It’s somethin’ I’ve never done before,” said Hattie uncertainly, “goin’ out with two guys—men—in one evenin’, but if Paul has to go——”

“I wouldn’t have offered to stand this watch,” I told her, “but the guy whose place I’m taking has to visit a sick girl-friend over in Dartmouth. Arthur will take care of you all right—never you fear.”

I left a transformed Captain Milton hopelessly lost in the depths of French Hattie’s eyes.

“How did you make out, Captain?” I asked the moneylender the following morning aboard ship.

“Say, Bart, she’s a peach!” he exclaimed enthusiastically. “An’ I went over big with her. I got another date with her this evenin’ if I can find somebody to stand my watch for me aboard.” He eyed me speculatively. “How ’bout you doin’ it for me? I’ll make it worth your while. Five bucks!”

The bargain was struck.

"Where did you take Hattie last night?" I asked.

"We went to a movie, and then I took her back to the Y.W.C.A. I was back aboard ship by midnight."

"That's fine! Take good care of her, Captain. She's just an unsophisticated little country girl trying to put on wise city manners. You heard her the first night we saw her. Don't take advantage of her simplicity."

"Not me, Bart, not me!" Milton assured me earnestly. "I'm on the level with her."

Marie too had good news to report two days later.

"Everything's fine. Hattie's got him hooked. All she's got to do now is to play him a few more days and then wedding bells!"

"She'll have to work fast," said Kane. "We've only got a few more days in port—a week at the most."

"Wouldn't surprise me," declared Marie, "if he popped the question any day now."

And while we anxiously awaited the consummation of the moneylender's romance Pelican Pete provided a break in the monotony of routine aboard the *Mohican* in port, and temporarily stole the spotlight from the anticipatory bridegroom.

The despair of every commissary steward was the moon-faced boiler-minder dubbed Pelican Pete. He had a gargantuan appetite variously put down to anything from tapeworms to the suggestion that his mother had been frightened by a lion in the zoo at feeding time. Pete's reputation as a gusty trencherman was a byword in the service. When he reported aboard the *Mohican* in Oakland some months before, Famine Levy, the ship's commissary steward, heaved a dismal sigh and cursed his fate.

"How do you expect me to keep a surplus in the general Mess, sir, with Pelican Pete aboard?" he protested to the commissary officer when the latter brought his attention to the requirement. "It takes ten men's rations to keep that hungry bird in chow. He'll run the Mess in the hole for a cert, sir. Can't we get him transferred before we sail?" he asked, with forlorn hope.

"Who'll take him?" retorted the worried commissary officer.

"He's too well known. No other cutter will have him. That's why they palmed him off on us. He made the Alaskan cruise last year on the *Bear*, and they were stuck with him for eight long months. I understand they had to begin scraping the barnacles from the ship's bottom to keep him from starving."

It was a trial to sit at Mess with the insatiable Pete. There never seemed to be enough food to go round when he was present. He had the disconcerting habit of bolting his food as rapidly as he could and then sitting plaintively eyeing your plate and inquiring in a voice of humble entreaty if you wanted that piece of meat or that potato. Before assent or negation could be given he swooped down on the desired object with a stabbing fork, and before you could swallow the food in your own mouth to open the channels of protest, the perennially unsatisfied glutton was prodding his fork in two other directions. Half of his pay, it was conservatively estimated, was spent in the cutter's canteen on candy, cookies, etc., and the other half spent in restaurants ashore.

In addition to his gastronomical excesses Pelican Pete had a streak of low drama in him which bubbled to the surface when he had drunk a little too well. He was an avid reader of the blood-and-thunder dime magazines and in his cups would confuse his own identity with the lurid personalities of some of the gorier protagonists of his favourite forms of literature. Then other drunken sailors from other ships would receive Pete's dark hints that his past was a sinister and most exciting one and his presence now in the Coast Guard only inspired by the necessity of concealment from the eager pursuit of the police of six nations.

Aboard the *Mobican* Pete's romancings were ignored. It was a well-known and ridiculed fact that he was definitely gun-shy. Once during the firing of a salute aboard ship when entering Halifax some weeks earlier he had fainted from the effects of his phobia.

When one morning he was posted as over leave the commissary steward, Famine Levy, thought his many prayers to a hitherto deaf Providence had been answered. The least he wished the missing gourmand was four weeks in the Victoria General Hospital

with ptomaine poisoning. It would, at least, afford him a respite from the constant battle with supply and demand of which Pete was the hub.

Routine inquiries were made at Halifax's hospitals and gaols after Pete failed to put in an appearance meal after meal. The police, during the course of the investigation, made known to the *Mobican* that a man wearing a Coast Guard uniform had been picked up for drunkenness at an early hour of the morning. Would somebody come down to the gaol, identify him, and pay his fine?

The executive officer detailed the Master-at-arms to undertake the errand and the negotiations involved. This he did and soon brought back with him one who was assumed to be the chastised Pete but who was nothing of the kind.

"Me name is Smithers," protested the prisoner returned under duress and now under obligation to the *Mobican* for the payment of his fine, "an' I'm off the blinkin' *Daffodil*. One of yer ruddy blokes poked a bloody gun in me flamin' ribs an' made me swap uniforms with 'm. Tough bloke, 'e was, too—Gorblimey if he wosn't! Said 'e wos a big gangster before joinin' the Coast Guard. We 'ad a few drinks together. . . ."

Which seemed to explain nearly everything.

H.M.S. *Daffodil* was a British sloop-of-war which had sailed for Bermuda earlier in the day. The *Mobican* wirelessly to it inquiring whether the missing Pelican Pete was aboard. The reply was in the affirmative. The mathematical minds of the *Mobican* were put together, and the deduction was that Pete, after having eaten to his usual excess and matched substance with liquid, had performed his customary Jekyll-Hyde metamorphosis while under the influence.

Acting the part of one of the swashbuckling characters from his favourite magazine thriller, Pete had compelled the sailor from the British ship to exchange uniforms with him, acting out the reality of his fictional vaporizings, after which he had been picked up by a British shore patrol for intoxication and been hustled aboard the *Daffodil* and into her brig for safe-keeping and sobering. It was only after the British ship had sailed that

the error had been discovered, and then, of course, it was too late to rectify it.

Pelican Pete would be turned over to the American Consul at Bermuda, according to the word sent by the *Daffodil*'s commanding officer, and sent back to the United States. Meanwhile would we turn the equally missing Smithers from the *Daffodil* over to H.M.S. *Antelope*?

We would . . . and did. . . .

"Say, Bart!" Captain Milton hailed me three days after his momentous introduction to French Hattie. "I'm kinda worried about Miss Surdez."

"Worried? Something gone wrong, Captain?"

The moneylender sighed in woebegone manner. "Hattie says her folks want her to go back home to Truro. Says she might be leavin' in a week. The hell of it is I'm crazy about her, an' I know she likes me. What d'yer think I ought to do about it?"

"There's nothing for you to do, unless—— Oh, but of course, that's absurd!"

"What is?"

"Marry her," I said casually.

Captain Milton's pinched features worked painfully. "S'pose —s'pose she turns me down?"

"Faint heart ne'er won fair maid. Just buck up and pop the question."

"Honest, Bart," Milton gulped, "I ain't got the nerve. S'pose," he suggested timidly, "you ask her for me. I could make it worth your while, you know," he finished quickly.

"How much?"

"Five bucks."

"No," I demurred. "After all, you should do the asking, not me."

"Ten bucks, ten bucks!"

"Well, I'll see what I can do, seeing that you're a shipmate, Captain."

"That's the way I like to hear yer talk. Suppose you have

chow with Hattie an' I up town this evenin' an' see what you can do?"

It was a very nervous Shylock who sat facing French Hattie and me that evening in the restaurant. He merely toyed with his food, seemed to have difficulty in meeting Hattie's fresh, innocent eyes, kept throwing furtive, covert glances pregnant with meaning at me, and altogether acted so much like a chump that I decided to put him out of his misery at once, or, rather, put his feet on the path to more of it.

"Arthur tells me you may be leaving for home in a few days, Hattie," I said.

"Yes. The folks want me back on the farm."

"Do you want to go?"

"No, I don't. But—but——" Her lips trembled, and she looked at the flushed moneylender from beneath lowered lids. "They won't send me any more money to live on. So what can I do?" The appeal was put up straight to Captain Milton.

"You don't have to leave," I pointed out. "There may be some means which will let you stay."

"Some—some man, you mean?" Hattie faltered shyly.

"Well . . . yes."

"Oh, no—oh, no! I—I just couldn't!" Hattie appeared overcome with confusion. "I—I wasn't brought up that way!"

"I meant marriage," I explained hastily.

"Oh," said Hattie. "That's different. Goodness me, I didn't know what you might be suggestin'! I was beginnin' to lose faith in you, Paul!"

"He didn't mean nothin' wrong," Milton defended me earnestly.

"Er—would you entertain the thoughts of marriage, Hattie?" I asked.

"If—if somebody I loved asked me," she replied tremulously.

"Would you marry Arthur?" I said boldly.

Hattie was silent.

"Would yer marry me, Hattie?" quavered the moneylender, gathering a little courage. "If I asked yer to?"

"But sailors——" began Hattie doubtfully.

"Tell her I'm different from them other beachcombers," Milton urged me. "I'm a guy what stands by his word. Bart'll tell yer he's never seen me out with another girl an' that I don't do no two-timin'."

"But how are we goin' to live?" asked Hattie. "Sailors don't make much money."

Milton dismissed that problem airily. "Don't worry about that. I've got more money than any man aboard the *Mohican*. I know how to make money—an' hang on to it, too, don't I, Bart?"

"You certainly do," I corroborated. "Arthur has some private means," I explained to Hattie. "Ample enough for him to marry on an' settle down, which I think he intends doing when his enlistment runs out."

"I'm goin' to buy a farm when I quit the sea," Milton announced.

"A farm?" Hattie looked at him in wide-eyed, flattering wonder. "Oh, Arthur!"

"When'll we get spliced?" the moneylender asked eagerly.

"Suppose," Hattie suggested, "we make it next Saturday—that's the day before you sail."

Milton looked disappointed. "Can't we make it sooner, honey?" he entreated.

"It's all so sudden-like!" protested Hattie girlishly. "I—I want to get used to it. An' besides, I ain't got any weddin' clothes."

"What's wrong with them you're wearin'?" Milton demanded.

"Hattie is right, Arthur," I threw in. "She ought to have a trousseau and all the trimmings. After all, a wedding is an important event in a girl's life."

Some of the old Captain Milton came to the surface in his next remark.

"But that'll cost money!"

"You can afford it," I maintained. "And it's cheap at the price if it'll bring happiness to the woman you love."

"Oh, I've always dreamed of a fine weddin'," Hattie confessed blissfully, "with bridesmaids and flowers. You can be best man, Paul."

"Great!" I approved.

Milton capitulated. "Anythin' you say, Hattie!"

"Allow me to congratulate you both," I said, grasping Milton's bony hand and shaking it warmly, "and wish you the very best of success in your wedded life. You, Hattie, are indeed fortunate in getting a husband like Arthur—a man who doesn't drink and smoke and who saves his money. He'll make you very, very happy, if I'm not very, very mistaken. And you, Arthur—well, all I can say to you is, you deserve it!"

There was wonderment aboard the *Mohican* when news of the impending nuptials became known. The consensus of opinion and sentiment regarding the approaching event boiled down to two or three prevailing considerations.

"She must be blind."

"Perhaps she's a mail-order bride and ain't seen him yet!"

"Well, she's got my sympathy, whoever she is, him with a mug only a shark could love!"

Since I had played so prominent a part in the earlier arrangements it was on my shoulders that the moneylender deposited responsibility for the necessary wedding arrangements.

"You see, Bart, I dunno nothin' about gettin' these sort o' things squared away."

"Why not let a committee handle it, Captain? It's too big a job for just one man. Donovan's a pretty savvy guy. Then there's Kane, too. Why not let the three of us take care of the arrangements? All you'll have to do is get married and we'll do all the worrying for you."

Milton was doubtful about Donovan, who had fallen into disfavour with him.

"He wasn't much of a counsel to me during that hot-cakes trial," he objected. "No . . . I ain't so sure about him."

"Donovan," I insisted, "was once a gentleman. He's up on all the etiquette of this sort of thing—you know, the right thing to say and do. In fact, I propose you make him chairman of the committee."

It was not a proposal to which Milton subscribed with heart and soul, but, relying upon my closer familiarity with the hinges

upon which the door to matrimony swung and at my urging, he finally agreed.

"There will be incidental expenses," I broke the news to him.

He took it stoically enough. "How much?"

"Let's take that up with the committee—if Donovan and Kane can be prevailed upon to serve."

My friends and I were extremely gratified at the progress of our conspiracy to involve the money-gouging Milton in a predicament that was likely to cost him dear. He had never shown mercy to any of us in his usurious toils.

With Eskimo Marie and myself to officiate as bridesmaid and best man, the committee went ahead with its other plans for the approaching ceremony, aided and abetted by the expense account put at our disposal by the groom.

It was Donovan's suggestion that the ceremony itself be performed in the lobby of the Mariner's Arms Hotel, and that the subsequent celebration be confined to that hostelry since it was a familiar stamping ground for most of us. The manager of the house fell in with our plans eagerly, delighted at the opportunity to dignify the hotel with a convention unlikely to flout the moral code for a change. He quoted a reasonable figure of twenty-five dollars for the use of the lobby, plus breakages, which were to be deducted from another twenty-five dollars deposited in advance for that purpose.

The wedding-cake was to be baked by one of the *Mohican's* cooks, and Famine Levy was to have charge of the catering arrangements for an honorarium, the said arrangements to incorporate the post-ceremonial banquet in the lobby.

The Committee in Charge of Arrangements called on Captain Milton for further finances. We had spent the first hundred dollars he had given us in two days. Milton feebly demurred at the demand and hinted that the only efficiency the committee had displayed was in running out of his money! We had the suitable receipted bills to display beneath his sceptic nose. One item in particular aroused the moneylender's parsimonious ire.

"Two gallons of rum among the refreshments?" he hooted,

dismayed. "You know I don't drink. I'd rather have tea, coffee, or lemonade."

"How are you goin' to spike punch with junk like that?" demanded Kane scornfully.

"Two gallons of rum is enough to spike punch for the whole ship!" Milton protested. "I want this to be a quiet weddin'. Just the committee an' a few others."

"But we've already invited the whole ship, Captain," said Donovan.

"What!" Milton gazed at him blankly. "Why, this weddin' will run into big dough!" he agonized.

"I had a double purpose in being so liberal with your money and hospitality," Donovan informed him earnestly. "You see, Captain, you're not very popular with the crew, as you must know. Here's your one big chance to get back into their good graces just at the cost of a few measly dollars. Don't you think it worth it?"

"All right, Paddy," said the moneylender after some moments' thought, as he counted out a hundred dollars from a large roll of bills. "Maybe you're right. Now, I guess you know I'm trustin' yer to the limit?" he remarked.

"Just leave everything to us," Donovan advised him soothingly.

"An' there better be no double-crossin'," Milton warned. "Remember, if I find out anythin' wrong none o' you will ever get a loan out of me again—not one red cent. An' I want to see bills for everythin' you buy."

"We been workin' our damn' heads off for you," said Kane angrily, "an' that's the sort of appreciation we get!"

"Aw, I didn't mean it, Red," Milton apologized. "I'm just a little nervous—that's all."

"No need to worry," Donovan assured him. "That amnesty I declared has made you the most popular man on the ship. Everybody's rooting for you!"

"That what you made?" Milton asked curiously.

"Amnesty."

"What's that?"

"Declaring all loans free of interest for the month," Donovan innocently explained.

Captain Milton reeled against a stanchion and clung to it for support, a dazed look on his face. "Interest free for the month!" he gasped, horror-stricken. "But I've got six hundred bucks loaned out!" he shrieked. "I'll be out two hundred and forty bucks interest."

"But what's two hundred and forty dollars compared with the goodwill of your shipmates?" Donovan blandly inquired.

Many things were on Captain Milton's trembling tongue to say, many things were in his small eyes already said, but with a mighty effort he controlled himself.

"Two hundred and forty bucks," he gulped, and let it end there, with as good a grace as he could muster, in honour of the signal event about to happen in his life.

Kane, Donovan, and I left Milton to his troubled thoughts and took ourselves down to Sticks', where we proceeded to make a five-dollar inroad on Milton's expense account by the purchase of a quart of Scotch whisky.

"This comes under the head of refreshments for the committee," Donovan assured us, "and as such is entirely permissible."

Donovan, having once been a gentleman and up in all the social niceties, was our Delphian oracle, and we consumed the liquor undisturbed by conscience.

"There's one thing we've forgotten," I said. "Who's going to tie the knot?"

"There are plenty of skypilots in this town who'd like the job for a few dollars," said Kane.

"True enough," Donovan agreed, pouring out another measure of the committee's refreshment, "but, this being a service wedding, I think we should get an Army or Navy chaplain to perform it. Gives it more polish than a civilian minister. I suggest we inquire about it from one of the *Antelope's* crowd. Perhaps they carry a chaplain aboard."

There were several sailors from the British ship in the bar. I went over to one of them and asked if they had a chaplain.

"Yuss. Old Blood 'n' Thunder Forsythe, we calls 'im. Tells

bar-room stories from one side of 'is mouth an' quotes scripture from the other. 'E'll be only too 'appy to 'elp yer out—particularly if you prime 'im wiv a couple o' stiff 'ookers before'and. Yuss, me lad, ol' Blood 'n' Thunder is the man for yer, an' if yer hurries down aboard the *Hantelope* yer might catch 'im afore 'e goes out on 'is nightly binge."

A tram-ride down Barrington Street brought us to one of the entrances to the dockyard where H.M.S. *Antelope* was moored. The sentinel at the gate, a Royal Canadian Mounted Policeman, passed us through and informed us at what pier the ship was berthed. She was the same cruiser which had rescued Kane and Nelander from a cold, watery grave following their fracas on the *Mohican's* quarterdeck during our first in-port period in Halifax, and was undergoing some minor repairs before proceeding to Bermuda, where she was to fire a gunnery practice with other vessels of the British West Indian station.

Chaplain Forsyte's appearance belied his reputation when we met him. He was a stockily built man with a pair of merry, twinkling eyes, almost bald, his greying hair fringing his skull much in the manner of a tonsured monk. The only visible indication of the gustier side to his character was the magnificent colouring of his nose and the unmistakable reek of gin radiating from his person every time he moved. He promised to be present at the Mariner's Arms on the evening designated and gratefully accepted the quart bottle of gin we left as a slight token of esteem.

Captain Milton beamed approvingly when we informed him of our negotiation, and even deigned to acknowledge the wisdom of the amnesty on all interest loans, thus vindicating Donovan's intrepid indiscretion, for the erstwhile penny-pincher now seemed to be the most popular man aboard ship and he found the nectar a most heady one. His marriage was the talk of the *Mohican*.

"I guess it was worth a coupla hundred bucks at that," he admitted.

The crew of the cutter threw itself into the wedding arrangements with a will. They descended *en masse* on the Mariner's Arms. That bug-bedevelled hostelry looked cleaner than it had

in years. Flags and bunting from the *Mobican* draped the walls, concealed the ravages of time on the dirty, cracking plaster, and lent to the lobby an air of gaiety.

Faminè Levy had laid seven tables for the banquet which was to follow the ceremony. The huge cake juggled by one of the ship's cooks was carefully and tenderly given its place of honour on the table reserved for the happy couple. Upstairs two of the best of the dreary rooms had been put aside as a bridal suite. In fact, all the rooms had been taken by the guests and their ladies, the choice flowers of the Halifax fleshpots.

An efficient group swooped down on the bridal suite to give it special, loving attention. Two cowbells were suspended from the bed-springs and liberal quantities of itching powder sprinkled on the sheets and blankets.

One hour before the ceremony Chaplain Forsyte, of the *Antelope*, arrived complaining of a cold and suggesting a prescription in one and the same breath.

Kane gave him a bottle of gin, which he took to a corner, applying himself thereto very diligently while awaiting his cue.

"If this keeps up," Donovan murmured, eyeing the Chaplain uneasily as he tossed drink after drink down his throat, "we'll have to go out and get another skypilot. He'll be blotto by the time the bride and groom show up."

"His kind've got hollow legs," stated Kane authoritatively. The assurance coming from one of his professional standing was enough to ease Donovan's apprehension.

The lobby began to fill with wedding-guests. The crew of the *Mobican* was there to a man accompanied by their sweethearts. Sticks had obligingly loaned us his three-piece orchestra of unemployed fishermen—two accordions and a fiddle. The guests guaranteed the success of the wedding and their own joyful participation by fortifying themselves with the necessary stimulation before arrival and lost no time continuing where they had left off outside. The noise and excitement, hilarity and conviviality, were marked, even before the arrival of the groom.

A loud cheer greeted his presence in the doorway where he

had been deposited by a taxi. He was nattily attired in dress-blues and wet with nervous perspiration. He mopped his brow as he acknowledged the plaudits of his admirers and took a seat at the table beside me.

"Where's Hattie?" he whispered anxiously.

"She ought to be here in a few minutes."

"I'm nervous as a cat," he confided. "Minister here?"

"He's changing his clothes, putting on vestments."

"God, I'll be glad when it's all over!" muttered the shaky bridegroom.

A new roar of applause arose from the waiting guests. The bride had arrived. The orchestra struck up the appropriate *Wedding March*, and Hattie advanced into the lobby followed by Eskimo Marie carrying a large bouquet of flowers. Hattie was turned out really well in a long white silk dress and flowing veil. She managed miraculously to create the illusion of virginity.

An indiscriminate roar of welcome was now given Chaplain Forsyte, who emerged a little unsteadily from an adjoining room wearing a white surplice over his cassock and bearing a prayer-book in his hands.

Donovan signalled to me, and I nudged the groom. He got to his feet and walked towards the waiting Chaplain. I accompanied him in my capacity as best man. Another signal and Hattie came to join the groom, Eskimo Marie with her. At a gesture from Donovan, who was acting as master of ceremonies, the orchestra died away. A hush settled over the lobby of the Mariner's Arms as Chaplain Forsyte opened his prayer-book.

"My dear friends," he began solemnly, and with equal solemnity added pointedly, "*Hic!* You are about to witness a union both serious and sacred—*hic!* Most serious because it will join together for life in a relationship so close and—*hic!*—intimate that it will profoundly influence the whole future of these two. Most sacred because it—*hic!*—is most sacred. That future," continued the Chaplain sonorously, warming up, "that future with its hopes and disappointments, its successes and failures, its—*hic! hic!*—pleasures and pains, its joys and its sorrows, is hidden from your eyes—*hic!*"

Donovan edged close to me. "The blighter's blotto. He hardly knows what he's saying. Grab him if he falls!"

The Chaplain belched discreetly, hiccuped openly, and continued with befuddled aplomb.

"Truly, then, are these words most serious. It is a beautiful—*hic!*—tribute to your faith in each other that, recognizing their full import—*hic!*—import—*hic!*—where was I?"

"Import!" hissed Donovan.

"Import," nodded the Chaplain rather blearily, "you are nevertheless so willing an' ready to pronounce 'em. And so you begin your married life by the voluntary and complete surrender of your individual lives—*hic!*—in the interest of that deeper and wilder—*hic!*—I mean, wider—life which you are about to have in common."

Donovan nudged me again. "I don't give him much longer. If he falls we'll say he was overcome by the heat."

The Chaplain took a deep breath and rolled on.

"No greater blessing can come to married life than—*hic!*—conjugal love, loyal an' true to the end. May, then, this love with which you join your hearts an' hands to-day—*hic!*—never fail, but grow deeper an' stronger as the years go—*hic!*—go on."

Chaplain Forsyte dropped his prayer-book and stared at the bride and groom glassily. Donovan retrieved it and placed it in his hands again.

"Do you, Arthur Milton, here present—I mean—take Hattie Surdez as—to be thy lawful wedded wife?"

"I do," mumbled the moneylender, regarding the unsteady, swaying, incoherent Chaplain anxiously.

Forsyte's knees buckled. I reached his side simultaneously with Donovan and held him propped up.

"Where was I now?"

"All you have to do is ask the bride," Donovan whispered in his ear.

"Ah! Do you, Hattie Surdez, take Arthur Milton, here present, for thy lawful wedded husband?"

"I do," said Hattie.

"I now pronounce thee wife an'—*hic!*—man 'n' wife—*hoc!*"

His mission performed, the Chaplain gave himself up to languor and sagged at the knees. He was removed by Kane and another sailor to an upstairs room to sleep it off. Later in the night he revived to come downstairs and regale us with a vast store of hilarious bar-room stories gathered in the course of his wanderings over the seven seas and to drink more gin.

After the banquet the tables were cleared. The orchestra struck up to pay for its feed . . . played and played until it too succumbed to its potations, much to the disgust of the dancers still unafflicted by the prevailing paralysis.

Shortly before daylight the festivities were brought to a close by the exhausted disappearance of the bride and groom. A loud scream issued from the bridal suite. Kane dashed up to investigate and returned to report that Hattie had been frightened by the apparition of Olaf the Ape, whom some wag from the *Mobican* had put in the bed to contest the place ordinarily expected by the indignant groom.

Olaf was removed, harmony restored, and love—love reigned supreme in the Mariner's Arms.

Eight

YOU'VE GOTTA GET UP!" IT INSISTED BRASSILY. YOU'VE gotta get up! *You've gotta get up!*"

The bugle's blaring reveille struggled through the mists of slumber, titillated my reluctant eardrums into attention, welling and ringing through my aching head.

I struggled from the depths of a sleep as profound as the silent fathoms beneath the keel of the *Mobican* on patrol. My mouth tasted as if I had supped lavishly on bilge-water, and my aggrieved stomach reproached me with a painful eloquence all its own.

On the floor of the bedroom in the shoddy Mariner's Arms wherein I blearily returned to life at the insistence of the relentless

bugle I saw Donovan lying alongside me, while occupying the only bed was Nelander, his brawny arms wrapped round the pillow in a python-like grasp.

With a startled exclamation I recalled it was sailing day. The town clock just below the Citadel boomed out a coincident seven strokes. Liberty expired at seven-thirty. We were to sail at eight. "*You've gotta get up! You've gotta get up!*"

Down below in the lobby of the hotel, which looked as if an army of dustmen had deposited the week's collection in it, the obstinate bugle still broadcast its inescapable command.

"*You've gotta get up! You've gotta get up!*"

A boatswain's pipe shrilled.

"Up all hammocks!" bawled a voice which I recognized as that of the leather-lunged Master-at-arms. "Rise and shine, sailors! Rise and shine!"

I went back to the bedroom to arouse Donovan.

"Wake up, Paddy!" I shook him.

"Tell Gabriel to stow that horn," he replied sleepily, sitting painfully erect and giving vent to a gigantic yawn.

"We're sailing in an hour," I said. "Come on, Paddy. We don't want to miss the ship."

I next went over to the bed and aroused Nelander and then was somewhat startled to hear a voice beneath that article of furniture inquire: "I say, there! Where am I?"

Investigation revealed the florid face of Chaplain Forsyte, R.N. My last recollection of him had been of hours before when he was regaling us with breezy yarns of his amorous exploits with ready barmaids of the various Channel ports during the war years he had spent in the Dover Patrol.

"There was a wedding," I reminded him. "Remember?"

"Oh, yes. Who got married?"

"One of the men off the *Mobican*."

"Most interesting. How did it go?"

"You did a fine job. We're all grateful to you."

"By Jove!" he groaned, forgetting past bacchanalia for present misery. "My head aches! How I could stand a spot of gin!" He glanced at me hopefully. "Don't have one about, do you?"

"No," I discouraged him immediately. "I don't. But get up and come below. Maybe we can find something downstairs to pick us up."

In a stale parade of sour stomachs, dark brown tastes, and buzzing heads, Donovan, Kane, Forsyte, Nelander, and myself clumped downstairs, stumbling over the rubbish which littered the lobby. In pairs and groups the wedding-guests were emerging from the various rooms of the hostelry, brushing uniforms, adjusting neckerchiefs, uncreasing their flat-hats.

The Master-at-arms clucked deprecatingly as he appraised us.

"What a drunken mob you turned out to be! Just as well we don't have weddings every day of the week. Lucky it's only a couple of blocks to the ship. Now answer to your names as I call 'em off."

He unfolded a typewritten sheet of paper and began the roll-call. His task was an easy one, for, attracted by the lavish banquet Famine Levy and his aides had supplied, practically all the lower ratings from the *Mohican* had attended the wedding of the previous evening.

"Adams!"

"Present!"

"Allen!"

"Present!"

"Bart!"

"Present!"

"Corson!"

"Erk!"

"What?" frowned the Master-at-arms, raising his eyes from the paper.

"Corson's clearing his stomach, Jimmy-legs," I answered for the unfortunate paying for his indiscretions of the night before.

"H'mm. Donovan!"

"Present!"

"Harper!"

"Yippee!"

"Harper!" repeated the Master-at-arms sternly.

"Present!" came the more subdued acknowledgement.

"Kane!"

Silence.

"KANE!"

The Master-at-arms scrutinized our uneven ranks.

"Find what room he slept in and shake him out!" And so it went. Those who failed to answer to their names were routed out of their rooms and chased below to muster along with the rest of us. Finally all but one name had been accounted for.

"Milton!"

No answer.

"Where's that guy?" demanded the Master-at-arms in exasperation. "He's holdin' up the parade."

"Aw, give him a chance, Jimmy-legs," pleaded Chile Smythe. "He's probably sayin' farewell to the bride."

"The Ice Patrol ain't goin' to wait for him. Sound reveille again, Bugler!" ordered the Master-at-arms.

"You've gotta get up! You've gotta get up! You've gotta get up in the morning!"

The last notes died away unproductive of result.

"Looks like he needs a special invitation," said the Master-at-arms grimly. "Get a bucket of water, Bart, and follow me. You, Kane, get another bucket! If I need more I'll holler down."

We climbed the dark, rickety steps and approached the bridal suite. The work of one of the *Mohican's* many robust wits hung in the shape of a crudely painted placard on the door.

"I hate to crash in," admitted the relenting Master-at-arms as we stood outside the door. "I was married two or three times myself. Guess maybe I'd better knock."

A dozen reverberating thumps brought no response.

"Must've passed out," Kane surmised.

The moment of contrition which had stolen into the breast of the Master-at-arms had now passed.

"Heave those buckets right on to him when I give you the word," he ordered.

"But the bride," I demurred. "Surely you're not going to be so ungallant as to sluice her down, too?"

"Ain't I?" grimly. He inserted a master-key, procured from

the management, into the lock, turned it, and swung open the door. All eyes focused on the bed. Sprawled out thereon, snoring an out-of-key rondeau, lay Captain Milton, dead to the world. Cuddled companionably close to him slept Olaf the Ape.

"I thought he married French Hattie!" shouted Kane, with a roar of laughter.

"Looks like he married Olaf," commented the Master-at-arms, unamused. "An' don't they look a well-matched pair! Let 'em have it!" he barked.

Two buckets of dirty water sloshed down on the bed and occupants. Olaf revived first with a squeal. Captain Milton shook himself into slower consciousness.

"Come on, Captain, you're holdin' up the parade!" growled the Master-at-arms.

"Hattie! Where's my wife?" demanded the startled husband. He put his hand to his head. "God, I feel funny! Like I been doped or somethin'." He slid off the dripping bed on to thin, reed-like hairy legs. His first concern was for his trousers, not to cover his nakedness, but to show his trust in shipmates by a careful count of the contents of his pocket. He gave a dismal howl.

"I been robbed! Some one's been through my pockets an' lifted all I had—five hundred bucks!"

The Master-at-arms had small sympathy with him. Moneyless and brideless, he was hustled downstairs to join the motley throng waiting in the lobby.

It did not occur to Captain Milton to join the disappearance of his wife and that of his money—yet. He looked about him trying to discover her presence and insisted that his shipmates were playing some joke on him and had kidnapped her.

The unsympathetic wedding-guests of the night before guffawed.

"Don't worry, Captain; she'll turn up when she needs more dough!"

"Did you sign over your six-months death beneficiary to her?"

"Did she give you a good ride for your money, Captain?"

"Fall in outside!" shouted the Master-at-arms, deaf to Milton's

hysterical plea that he should be given assistance to discover the whereabouts of the absconding Hattie. "We're goin' to march back to the ship in formation. You, Captain, will be number one man in the front rank of the leading squad, so I can keep an eye on you."

We lined up in the cold street.

"Right dress! Count off! Squads, left—march!"

Our wan and pallid crew of roisterers shuffled along the still empty streets in the direction of the *Mobican's* berth, leaving a spasmodic trail of alcoholic vomit behind us and the woeful complaints of the overnight husband.

We filed over the gangway just as the ship's bell tolled seven bells. The quartermaster checked our names off the liberty list, then, saluting, announced to the officer of the deck, "All the wedding—er—I mean, all the liberty party back on time, sir!"

"Very well."

Kane cleared up the mystery of French Hattie's disappearance later when we were at sea.

"Everything clicked like clockwork," he chuckled. "Hattie's now on her way to Toronto with eight hundred bucks in her purse."

"But Milton only missed five hundred," I said.

"He handed her three hundred before they were married," grinned Kane. "To rent an apartment and buy some furniture. The only investment Hattie made was in a couple of pills she dropped in his drink last night. She rolled him for the five hundred and skin-out of that flea-house. Said she's gonna make a fresh start in Toronto."

"He had it coming to him," said Donovan.

"An' that ain't all." Kane pulled out a roll of bills from which he counted off fifty dollars and handed it to me. In response to my look of surprise he said, "Hattie didn't forget the Committee in Charge of Arrangements. She gave Eskimo Marie two hundred smackers to split four ways—her, me, Donovan, and you."

I pocketed the blood-money. Expenses and the ten-day in-port period in Halifax had cost the moneylender dearly. We estimated the amount to be close on a thousand dollars.

Perhaps it was not the thing to have perpetrated on the unsophisticated romantic. It was underhand, sneaky, deceitful retribution we had negotiated. But then, just as bad, and worse perhaps, is usury at the back-breaking rate of 40 per cent. per month—from unsophisticated sailors.

Moaned Captain Milton, "I'll never look at another dame as long as I live. I wish I'd let you have her, Bart!" he declared generously.

Tragedy always lurks just over the horizon on the Ice Patrol. And not alone are they those which spring from the hostile drift of icebergs.

The one we ran into on our return to patrol had to deal with men—the tough breed of men who put out of Gloucester, Massachusetts, and Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, to fish the Grand Banks for cod and haddock in two-masted fishing schooners.

Bearing down on us one morning was the *Emily Smith*, out of Gloucester, her master shouting his sad, epic tale of misfortune from the poop of the schooner.

"Lost two of my crew in a fog three days ago. Out in a dory. One of them——" The lusty old voice faltered. "One of them was my son."

Ten dories had the *Emily Smith* put over the side with two men in each to let out the baited trawls. Nine of them had been within hearing distance of her foghorn bleating out its recall signal when the fog thickened to the danger point. The last was beyond the sound range of the recall. For two days the fog hung like a heavy curtain. When it cleared away the missing dory was not in sight.

"We'll keep an eye out for them," promised Captain Clark of the *Mohican*. "If we find them we'll bring them into Halifax with us when we return from this patrol."

And find the missing dory we did. One week later. It was a diminutive speck in a vast emptiness of sea. Prone upon a catch of rotting codfish we found a young man, seven days' growth of beard on his face. He was delirious and babbling incoherently. Of his companion there was no sign.

The *Mobican's* surgeon was doubtful as he made his quick examination.

"Pretty far gone. I've got to operate. It's his only chance. Both legs will have to go."

They were frozen, gangrenous. Down in the sick-bay an emergency operation table was set up. The *Mobican* hove to while the surgeon went to work. Next day the fisherman revived from his coma—minus two legs amputated just above the knees.

He tried to push himself to a sitting posture and shrieked hoarsely at the *Mobican's* doctor trying to soothe him.

"Why didn't you let me stay in that dory? I'd have been better off dead! How am I going to make a living now with my legs gone?"

He had been a fine figure of youth—strong, stalwart, and handsome, with the tough breeding of long generations of sturdy fisher-folk.

"You swine! You butcher!" he moaned huskily, weak from his first outburst. "Goddam' your soul!"

Our commiserating surgeon remained sympathetic but unruffled. He had seen many such sights, heard many such recriminations, during his bloody war days in France.

"Watch him," he whispered to Iodine Mike, the pharmacist's mate. "If he doesn't pipe down, give him a hypo."

The rescued man, we found out in a few days, was the son of the captain of the *Emily Smith*. His dory mate had gone out of his mind and jumped overboard three days after their aimless drifting in the impenetrable fog. The convalescent apologized to the doctor for his early hysteria.

"You see," he quietly explained, "I'm good for nothing now. Had I died my wife and kids would have gotten ten thousand dollars from an insurance policy."

Dr Wilcoxon could only have recourse to an old adage.

"While there's life there's hope."

Seafaring men are prone to quick sympathy, and where their own kind is involved are downright generous. The plight of the crippled fisherman from the *Emily Smith* struck a responsive

chord in the hearts of officers and crew. By subscription and pledge a sum of a hundred and fifty dollars was raised and presented to him.

Before the patrol ended a sorrowful reunion was to take place in the *Mobican's* sick-bay. Out of the late afternoon mists loomed a fishing schooner under full press of sail. She was the *Emily Smith*, loaded with a catch of cod and haddock and bound home for Gloucester with a fair wind. The *Mobican* was hove to at the time, taking oceanographic soundings under the supervisory eye of the official Ice Observer.

Standing alongside the helmsman on the approaching schooner's poop stood the oil-skinned, weather-beaten, grey-bearded captain. His ship rose and fell on the ever-present ground swell as she heaved to off our quarter.

"See anythin' of my men?" he megaphoned across the water.

"Come aboard," invited Captain Clark kindly. "We have your son down in the sick-bay."

A dory was quickly lowered from the schooner and rowed across to us. The old captain scaled our Jacob's ladder with remarkable agility for one of his years, stimulated, no doubt, by the thought of seeing again the son whom he had given up for lost.

I was with Iodine Mike in the sick-bay when the skipper of the *Emily Smith* came in. His eyes were alight with eager affection when they found his son's face. They lost their happy glow when they travelled slowly down the length of body outlined beneath the sheets to gaze with stark misery at the abbreviated legs. Neither father nor son said anything except for the volumes they spoke in the handclasp they gave each other.

Misty-eyed and shaken, the old mariner was led from the sick-bay. He climbed to the cutter's quarterdeck to give his thanks to Captain Clark for the rescue of his son.

"This was to be my last season off the Banks," he announced sadly. "The boy was to take command of the *Emily Smith* this fall. Looks as though I'll have to stick it out for a few more years. Been fishin' off the Banks fifty years now, come next fall. I tried to get Will to stay ashore," he said, the dull agony creeping

into his voice as his mind went down to the half-man who was his son lying helplessly in the sick-bay, "I tried to persuade him to tackle somethin' else. But——" For a moment the old man's words faltered, then, remembering the heritage he had turned over to his son, he finished proudly, "But he would go to sea!"

One of the bleakest and most inhospitable coasts I have seen in my years of wandering is the eastern and southern coasts of England's oldest crown colony—Newfoundland.

Great, rugged, towering cliffs raise grim, spray-lashed faces above the chill Atlantic combers thundering hollowly at their base. Off the eastern coast parade the menacing array of icebergs on their way south to the transatlantic steamship lanes. One day we saw three of these white monsters drifting sedately in the frigid grip of the Labrador Current.

We paid a visit to Trespassey Bay to drop anchor for a few hours and go ashore to the small fishing village nestling there. It was here in Trespassey Bay that aviation history had been made a few years before, and here, too, that the Coast Guard had shared in the glory of radiating from it. Lieutenant-Commander E. F. Stone, U.S.C.G., was one of the pilots of the NC-4, a naval plane which had blazed a new trail across the Atlantic to Europe in 1919.

The houses of the villagers were paragons of cleanliness, but showed the depths of poverty. Newfoundland's harbours, unlike those of Nova Scotia, are icebound during the winter months. Hence fishing is done mostly in spring and summer. It is on the proceeds of these two seasons that the inhabitants of the bleak fishing villages live during the harsh winter. If the price is not all it should be on the summer's catch of herring—as it sometimes is not—the villagers are obliged to live on credit extended by the village storekeepers. Seldom, if ever, are the fisher-folk out of debt. Yet year after year they hang on to their poor little homes, dependent upon the fortune of the wilful sea, ekeing out a meagre existence, risking their lives in their small boats, putting out to sea and sometimes never returning.

Famine Levy, the *Mohican's* commissary steward, had come ashore with us in the motor-boat and had brought with him a

store of delicacies from the canteen. They were for barter in this poorhouse of the mighty British Empire. For sweets, cigarettes, scented soaps, and tooth-pastes the fisherfolk gave us sufficient fresh fish to feed the cutter's crew for a couple of days.

Out in the bay the ship's whistle was blowing, sounding the recall signal for our landing-party. In a short time we were standing alongside the cutter's dipping rail watching barren Cape Race drop below the rim of the horizon.

Of all the nerve-wracking jobs aboard an Ice Patrol cutter that of radioman is easily the first.

The work is monotonous, continuous, confining. Nerves are stretched taut in the concentrated attention necessary for hours at a time without lapse.

'As crazy as a radioman,' is a common enough figure of speech in the Coast Guard. The simile is an apt one.

Only picked operators were carried aboard the *Mohican* on the International Ice Patrol, the very cream of the service.

Four lengthy broadcasts are sent out to all shipping daily, warning of the proximity of ice, and suggesting courses to be taken to avoid the possibility of collision. Between these major relays weather reports are received and disseminated from and to shipping of all nationalities, constituting so immense a volume of radio traffic that even experienced operators have been known to crack under the strain for all their years of work.

It is no unusual circumstance for a hundred thousand words to be received and transmitted by an Ice Patrol cutter's operators during the course of a routine patrol. For the entire twenty-four hours, and for every day of each fifteen-day patrol, the radio-room is an incessant hive of activity. One man is always on watch—sometimes two when the traffic is particularly heavy.

Through the headphones clamped over his ears the operator's ringing head is bedevilled both by the continual pounding and buzzing of the messages pouring in and by the unrelieved crashing and drumming of the perennial atmospherics. It is not a job for the highly strung individual.

He was a veteran of three patrols who went temporarily

haywire aboard the *Mobican*. He hurled his headphones over the ship's side with an oath and then rushed down to the berth-deck and hysterically condemned the quality of the meal about to be served.

Famine Levy, despite his hungry nickname, knew his business and did his best to see that we were fed as liberally as the ration allowance per man permitted. He stared agape at the wild-eyed apparition from the radio-room. The *Mobican*, incidentally, was considered to be a well-fed ship.

"I'm sick of this general Mess chow," the overwrought victim of the radio shouted. "From now on I'm taking my meals with the Old Man."

"You'll be takin' 'em in the brig—bread an' water—if you don't get away from those tables an' let the Mess cooks set 'em up," warned the commissary steward.

The radioman stabbed him with an emphatic finger.

"I want me a loin steak smothered with onions and a large order of French fried!" he ordered.

"Oh, yeah? An' what'll you have for dessert? Strawberry shortcake *à la mode* or pumpkin pie stuffed with lark's breasts?" Levy wanted to know.

"Ice cream and plenty of it!" snapped the radioman.

"You'll eat what the rest of 'em are eatin' an' like it!" said the steward grimly.

"Like hell I will!" retorted the other. "I'm eating with the skipper to-day."

"Jimmy-legs!" Levy bawled for the Master-at-arms. "This radio gadget has gone nuts on us. Lock him up!"

But the radio operator eluded the newcomer's grasp and fled to the upper deck, where he rushed without preface or preamble into the commanding officer's cabin.

Captain Clark was at table eating the noonday meal. He looked up inquiringly, a little startled by the brusque entry of the distracted key-pounder.

"Anything wrong?"

"Nothing," the radioman told him bitterly, "except that I'm tired of that chow they're putting out down below. That

goddam' belly-robbing swine Famine Levy is starving me to death. We've had chicken three times this week!"

To the amazement of the captain's Mess attendant, who had followed the radio operator's movements with disbelieving eyes, the latter drew up a chair to the table and sat himself down.

The commanding officer's quarters on board a Coast Guard cutter is hallowed territory, *sanctum sanctorum*, inner temple. Even the rest of the officers must first knock on the door, hat in hand, and request permission to enter.

But while the Mess attendant's surprise was overwhelming, the captain himself showed no perturbation. He had seen radiomen crack up before, and was astute enough to realize that the present instance was one of those unfortunate and not completely unexpected phenomena of life on a Coast Guard ship. Outside the cabin door stood the Master-at-arms, eyeing his quarry in conversation with the quiet-voiced captain watchfully, a pair of hand-irons dangling in his grasp.

"Sorry to learn that you're being starved below," the captain sympathized with his uninvited guest. "I'll look into it. Anyhow, just place your order with my steward."

"Loin steak smothered with onions, French fried!" snapped the radioman.

Captain Clark gestured silently to the open-mouthed Mess attendant that the order be supplied—and indicated with a short jerk of his head that the Master-at-arms should take himself off. While the radioman attacked the special meal which had been brought him, the captain chatted quietly and pleasantly, and at the meal's conclusion handed his self-imposed guest a cigar.

"And now take a look through these magazines," he suggested, getting up from the table. "I've got to run up on the bridge for a few minutes."

He returned a little later with Dr Wilcoxon and Iodine Mike. The radioman was induced to accompany them down to the sick-bay, where he remained under observation for the duration of the patrol.

"No watches for thirty days," was the doctor's prescription. "Just a bad case of nerves, but he'll be all right."

We had two guests aboard the *Mobican*. They were news-reel cameramen who had shipped with us from Halifax for the purpose of recording for cinema-goers ashore the various icebergs encountered during the course of our fifteen-day patrol and other items of interest which might be expected to interest landlubbers. We saw little of them the first two or three days while their stomachs acclimatized themselves to the unsteady new environment, but after that they were very much in evidence.

They were known to us as Mutt and Jeff, for one was tall and thin, the other short and stumpy.

Like many persons I have met connected with the moving-picture industry in some form or another in my haphazard peregrinations, these two exuded a mildly antagonistic air of smug egotism. With the quick, violent likes and dislikes of seafaring men, the consensus of feeling about these two lens-wielders aboard was a trifle on the off-side. We resented their air of patronage.

In common with many of their species they were confirmed gamblers. After recovering from their seasickness they went to work on us.

Being privileged guests aboard the *Mobican*, they messed with the wardroom officers. It was not long before they had inveigled those worthies into some spirited poker deals, and in two days had garnered all the loose change floating round that sphere of their operations. Then they transferred their attention to the steerage where lived the warrant-officers. The latter fell with equal disaster to themselves. Next to come under the scrutiny of these two moving-picture marvels were the less affluent petty-officers. Surfboat Joe and his cronies made a bitter struggle, but they might have spared themselves the effort. Mutt and Jeff walked all over them. Next they cast thoughtful eyes aft in the direction of the crew.

Their reputation had preceded them.

We faced them determinedly over the cards. Kane lost fifty dollars with a rapidity which made him blink—his share of the blood-money paid by French Hattie. He borrowed twenty-five dollars from me and lost that, too.

"There's somethin' phoney about those two sharks," he confided to me, scratching his thatch of red hair thoughtfully. "Just what it is I can't dope out, but I know they're not on the level. They always seem to win on their own deals. A couple of slickers—that's what they are, but too clever for us to catch 'em."

Our rough estimate of the collective winnings of Mutt and Jeff from bow to stern of the *Mobican* amounted to about seven hundred dollars.

We sat round down in the berth-deck and attempted to analyse wherein we had so signally failed in our first encounter with our opponents.

"They're shady all right," agreed Donovan, having himself lost thirty dollars. "You can't keep up that kind of luck in poker all the time."

"The point is what are we goin' to do about it an' how are we goin' to get our dough back?" asked Kane impatiently.

Donovan winked. "Leave it to the Irish. Borrow all the dough you can," he suggested, "and invite those two sharpers down to a game after eight o'clock reports to-night."

Gambling, of course, is an offence for which the regulations of the Coast Guard provide a punishment. Therefore all such playing aboard ship is surreptitious and hidden from the sight of the Master-at-arms, who is empowered to raid any game he may find in progress, confiscate the money, and place the culprits on report for flagrant violation of regulations.

The attached money is turned over to the executive officer, who usually deposits it in the cutter's welfare fund, or else turns it over to some worthy charity ashore, while the apprehended players are meted out such disciplinary measures as the captain decides.

The hawser-room, a compartment in the after-end of the lower berth-deck in which the towing hawsers, mooring lines, etc., are stowed, was the *Mobican's* gambling den. It was two decks down and far removed from the prying eyes of the prowling Master-at-arms, who spent most of his leisure hours playing pinnockle on the upper berth-deck.

An impromptu tarpaulin muster was the means of Kane, Donovan, and myself gathering together a sum which amounted to some thirty dollars apiece. Two other poker devotees had mustered a similar sum. Against our comparatively slim aggregate of a hundred and fifty dollars Mutt and Jeff were playing with seven hundred. This game would be our last chance to retrieve past losses.

"What's the limit to-night, boys?" Mutt jeered, when we assembled in the hawser-room.

"The sky," Kane succinctly replied, dealing the hand.

"Suits us," laughed Jeff tolerantly. "We thought we'd make it easier for you birds by suggesting a limit."

We played carefully, slowly, conservatively, trying to keep our wits about us, but the game threatened to end as had done its predecessors. For all our watchfulness and concentration Mutt and Jeff were slowly but surely raking in our cash, adding it to the seven hundred with which they had started playing against us.

A discreet knock sounded on the hawser-room door.

"Hello, what's that?" asked Kane.

"Probably another player wants to sit in," Donovan surmised.

"Let him in, Paul," said Kane. "He can have my hand in a few minutes. I'm about cleaned."

I opened the heavy steel door only to find myself gazing in dismay at the grim-faced Master-at-arms. Panic seized me. I saw myself facing another court. The last one was not finished with yet.

"Sit right where you are!" barked the Master-at-arms sternly. "All of you! And keep your mitts away from that dough!"

"Have a heart, Jimmy-legs!" pleaded Donovan. "We were only showing a little hospitality to guests."

"So I notice," snapped our persecutor, his eyes on the big pile of money in front of the surprised Mutt and Jeff. "Looks like the Salvation Army or the ship's welfare fund is goin' to be in for quite a few bucks. All of you can consider yourselves on report."

"Too bad, boys!" said Jeff, with an unfeeling grin as he scooped the money towards him.

"And you, too!" spat the Master-at-arms. "Lay off that dough. It's Government property now. I'm tellin' the captain about you birds—even though you are civilians. Don'tcha know gamblin' is against regulations?"

"No," said Jeff. "We didn't."

"Well, you know now. An' what's more you ain't got no business down in this part of the ship, especially playin' with the crew. You belong up in the wardroom with the officers."

"Say," put in Mutt truculently, "you can't order us about!"

"Yeah," Jeff chimed in confidently. "We're no sailors."

"No," agreed the Master-at-arms, "but your company will hear about this, an' I bet you ten to one you won't be allowed to take any more pictures aboard the *Mohican* or any other Coast Guard cutter. The ideal!" he snorted virtuously. "Underminin' the morals of the United States Coast Guard service in direct violation of its regulations."

Mutt and Jeff exchanged an uneasy glance and shifted restlessly.

"Didn't think it was as bad as all that," muttered the latter apologetically.

The Master-at-arms gathered in the money. "Lots of things you civvies don't know."

"Tell you what," said Jeff. "Seven hundred bucks of that dough you're counting belongs to me and my friend. The captain can't take that away from us like he can the rest of this money from these other fellows. Why not—ah—just keep it for yourself and forget the whole business? After all, we've got the—er—integrity of our company to think about, and that's worth seven hundred bucks to us."

The Master-at-arms regarded him coldly. "Are you tryin' to bribe me?"

"Um—we were only suggesting——" said Jeff uncertainly.

"Why not keep the money, Jimmy-legs," urged Donovan. "You can depend on us to keep quiet. These chaps are fine boys—and they're right about the seven hundred dollars belonging to them. We've only got a hundred and fifty in this game. If you place us on report we'll draw a court—and only for passing the time in friendly fun!"

The Master-at-arms considered the persuasion. "Well," he said haltingly, "I've never done anythin' like this before an' I don't like to start now. But if I can depend on you guys keepin' things quiet——"

"You're a gentleman, Jimmy-legs!" stated Donovan warmly. "A true gentleman and a fine shipmate."

Somewhat less enthusiastically Mutt and Jeff agreed as they watched the Master-at-arms pocket the money.

Extremely relieved at not having to face another court, I turned in my bunk, caring little about the money I had lost. I was very surprised the next day when Donovan counted out a hundred and thirty dollars in notes, which he held out to me.

"What's this for?" I gaped.

"The Master-at-arms is a real sport in spite of his tough looks," said Donovan, smiling. "I tipped him off to raid yesterday's game. He kept two hundred dollars for himself and returned a hundred apiece to the five of us players, plus the money we had when we started!"

Semper paratus!

Nine

STRANGE CUSTOMS AND A STRANGE TONGUE SLIPPED along the course of the Ice Patrol early in April when the French fishing fleet arrived off the Grand Banks of Newfoundland in barquentines and schooners, hailing from Brittany ports to take up its annual eight months' pursuit of cod, halibut, and haddock. These rugged, tough, wiry men had left their women and families far behind them in Saint-Malo and other Brittany ports while they exiled themselves off the dreary Grand Banks in the hard search for a livelihood.

Strange superstitions and strange beliefs sailed the heaving seas with them from the day they cleared their home ports to the day of their happy return.

The *Mohican's* official Ice Observer, Lieutenant Carlton, had

all the facts about them at his fingertips. He lent himself willingly to my tiresome questions about these folk.

The fleet comprised some thirty vessels, and their visit to the Grand Banks was a yearly one. When it assembles prior to its departure from Saint-Malo a colourful religious ceremony attends the event. On St Valentine's Day the ships are 'dressed,' bunting and signal flags festooning the rigging while the men gravely await the visit of the Archbishop of Rennes and his clergy to sprinkle holy water on the bow of each vessel. None would sail until this sacred office had been performed, otherwise hard luck would be sure to accompany it.

Preceding the harbour ceremony a high and solemn Mass is given in Saint-Malo's ancient cathedral which is strictly attended by every fisherman and each member of his family. Then the gilt-vested Archbishop and his acolytes lead a procession down to the water's edge pausing *en route* to deliver a prayer at the statue of an earlier Breton, Jacques Cartier, the discoverer of Canada. There they beseech God for a safe voyage, a good catch of fish, and an uneventful return to Brittany in the early autumn.

A canopied motor-boat awaits the Archbishop at the harbour. In it he makes the rounds of the fleet, sprinkling holy water on the bow of each vessel, and invoking the blessings of an omnipotent Providence for those aboard.

The ritual concluded, all return ashore. The fishermen plunge into a day of gaiety and festivity, their last day on land for eight months, their last day, perhaps, to see their native land and their loved ones for all time, for who can tell what may transpire on the sea which so freely gives and which so freely takes away?

A passage taking from three to four weeks and then the Grand Banks, cold, foggy, treacherous, where the fishermen will ply their trade from dawn to dusk, cleaning and gutting the day's catch by lamplight, salting it and stowing it below in the holds.

The smaller American and Canadian fishing schooners drift when their dories are dropped overside. The French vessels remain anchored for the most part, and so the danger to their dory-men of being lost in fog or snowstorm is considerably

minimized. But their work is arduous, the normal hazards of life ashore doubly intensified in this precarious occupation at sea, and it is no uncommon sight to those who man the Ice Patrol cutters to note a half-masted tricolour flying from the gaff of a Brittany vessel, sad sight to those who understand its sorrowful message of fatal accident.

Ceremony and ritual is not left behind when ancient Saint-Malo drops beneath the horizon and the fleet heads for the far-away fishing grounds. For arrival there and the beginning of work is attended by customs peculiarly its own. The fisherman who hauls the first cod or halibut into his dory must return immediately to the mother ship. A bottle of wine is opened by the captain and handed to the man. He pours it over the belly of the dead fish and throws the latter back overboard. The significance of this rite is the attracting of the live fish. When they detect the odour of their wine-reeking deceased finny colleague, like true fish about to be caught by good Frenchmen, they are presumed to succumb to the smell of the wine and will then swim and sport eagerly around the schooner or barquentine in the hope of being invited to partake of a tot as well.

One Sunday afternoon we hove to in answer to a signal hoist fluttering from the rigging of a little ketch-rigged craft we almost ran down in fog. The signal was a familiar one to us. R.Z. ("What is my position?")

When a fishing vessel has been fogbound for a few days, and if it has drifted without opportunity to take a celestial observation, the captain usually is uncertain of his position.

Always ready to serve, the captain of the Ice Patrol cutter will write the requested information on a blackboard—latitude and longitude—and display it in the rigging or on some other conveniently lofty and visible part of the cutter.

A liberally bewhiskered man put out from the little ketch in a dory and rowed over to us. When he came alongside he requested permission in French to come aboard. We lowered a Jacob's ladder and threw a line to the dory.

"These frog fishermen always stink," remarked Nelander, as we watched the visitor come aboard. "Better keep to windward

of him if you don't want to be gassed. If it ain't fish it's garlic. Dunno which is worse."

All the French fishermen we had met exuded an overpoweringly fishy odour. Fresh water is always a problem on their ships. It is sparingly rationed, and the supply is never prodigal enough to permit of the luxury of a bath.

But to our surprise the bewhiskered one had no offensive piscatorial aroma about him.

"I'll be damned!" exclaimed Surfboat Joe incredulously, as he helped the Frenchman over the side. "Smells clean as a lily."

The newcomer smiled benignly at us and delivered a flood of French, a language unintelligible to most of us, including the officers.

"Any of you men understand him?" asked the executive officer of those of us who were standing around the quarterdeck. "If so, I'd be obliged if you would interpret what this man is saying."

"I speak French, sir," replied Donovan. "Or I used to," he amended.

"See what you can do," the officer urged.

Donovan listened quietly a few minutes, then said, "He's a priest, sir. He wants us to take some mail ashore for him, and he also wants to make a few purchases in the canteen."

"A priest?" the officer echoed curiously. "Are you sure? He looks just like any other French fisherman."

Donovan grinned. "Could tell he wasn't by the absence of smell, sir. He's the chaplain of the French fishing fleet and was on his way down the Banks to say Mass aboard a barquentine this morning, but a fog came up and delayed him."

Father Voiture was a seagoing padre whose ministry ranged up and down the Grand Banks. He brought spiritual consolation and the Word of God to those aboard the vessels of his unique and far-stretching nautical parish, saying Masses on Sundays, hearing confessions, and at times administering the last rites of his Church to some unfortunate victim of blood-poisoning or exposure.

Feeling sometimes becomes strained between the volatile,

passionate Frenchmen, long exiled from the refining and relaxing influences of home and wives. Blows are struck, knives are flashed, wounds given often to fatal result. To alleviate this tension, to forestall possibilities of bloodshed, the nautical shepherd will climb aboard the vessels and arbitrate fancied or actual wrongs or grievances, often succeeding where officers have failed. For the illiterate among the crews he will write letters home to loved ones. He also serves their need for the indispensable little luxuries by carrying a small canteen aboard his own little vessel, selling tobacco and other sundry articles to his economically enslaved masculine congregation. This is no inexpensive undertaking for him, and he raises the necessary money by lecturing and popular subscription during the four months of the year he spends ashore in France.

Now cognizant of the old priest's requirements through Donovan's interpretative efforts, the Master-at-arms was ordered by the executive officer to collect all the old newspapers and magazines that could be gathered. Father Voiture was loaded down with them. From our canteen he bought a quantity of sweets, soap, tobacco, and incidentals likely to be required by the fishermen. He was profuse in his gratitude, and from his dory, which we cast loose from the cutter's side when he returned to it, he bestowed a resonant blessing upon us.

The *Mohican* once more got under way.

Among the many annoyances contributed to our lot aboard ship was one supplied by a subordinate of Surfboat Joe's—Thomas, Gunner's Mate, Second Class.

According to published advertisements in a species of cheap magazine to which he was addicted in moments of leisure, promise was held forth to the musically ambitious that they were certain to become not only the life of any party but a guaranteed financial success as well if they purchased a certain brand of saxophone and subscribed to the twenty lessons the manufacturers threw in with the bargain at a modest additional fee.

The intrigued Thomas bought his instrument on the hire-purchase plan and determinedly set about conquering it. His selection of an environment for that purpose was most ill-advised.

An Ice Patrol cutter at sea is perhaps the last place in the world to further a musical ambition.

Whenever he was off duty the indefatigable saxophonist, who stood no night watches, would lock himself in the armoury, from the highly burnished precincts of which would presently flow a nauseous cascade of weird and morbid sounds. The insulated bulkheads appeared to be of little service in subduing the noise.

The wardroom occupied by the officers was closer to the armoury than the berth-deck which quartered the crew. They stood it with admirable fortitude until tortured patience was worn to a ragged edge. Then they forbade the ambitious tyro further use of the armoury for his perverted purposes. Surfboat Joe too was quite relieved, for his earlier sufferance of Thomas's absorption in his instrument in the armoury had led to a suspicion on the part of the crew that he himself was contemplating the study of the trilling flute for the purpose of playing duets with his junior.

But the obstacles thrown in the path of the musically inclined sailor doggedly set on climbing the mountain of financial success and social superiority merely added to the stature of his determination. Undaunted, Thomas transferred the scene of his hollow bellowings aft to the crew. The only audience the unfortunate musician could be assured of there was Olaf the Ape, who would dance up and down in his own inimitable monkey fashion during the more hideous of Thomas's tuneless concoctions. Had Thomas been an unrated man we could have disposed of him in summary fashion. But he was a gunner's mate—a petty-officer.

"Why the hell don't you go up in the crow's nest, Guns, and do your practisin'?" Kane implored irritably, awakened from sleep by the raucous honkings of the embryo saxophonist. "How the hell do you expect us guys to sleep with all that damn' racket goin' on?"

"You won't have to stand it much longer," Thomas assuaged him. "My time's up when we get back to the States, an' I'm going to quit this outfit to join a' orchestra. That's why I want



EXPLODING A CHARGE ON AN ICEBERG

The Coast Guard carried out a number of experiments to disprove the belief of many people that icebergs can be broken up. Here a heavy charge of T.N.T. is being exploded in the side of a large berg. Comparatively little damage was done. The author (H. W.) was in the lifeboat seen in the picture.



THE ICEBERG AFTER THE EXPLOSION
The great mass of ice was very little affected.

to master these twenty lessons in a hurry. The place where I bought this saxophone guarantees me a job with a' orchestra when I get through 'em. Playing one of these in a band ashore has got going to sea an' crumbing up guns beat all to hell. Why," he let his aspirations soar to ecstatic heights, "I might have a' orchestra of my own in a few years!"

It was early May. Ahead of us stretched another two or three months before the North Atlantic would be free of the menace of icebergs. Two or three months . . . with a hooting saxophonist aboard trying to master twenty lessons in a frantic race against time!

The master minds of the crew went to work on the ways and means of nullifying the venom of that ghoulisn instrument.

"If I could get my hands on it . . ." Kane sighed wistfully.

"I've thought of that too," Donovan confided, "but Thomas takes no chances. He keeps it locked up in the armoury when he's not practising."

The armoury is sacred ground violable only by the Chief Gunner and his mates. Therein are stored in an orderly array of racks the cutter's small arms—rifles, pistols, and automatic guns. No one enters the armoury except on business, and a seaman has less business than anyone there except when duty takes him down to receive instruction in the use and handling of small arms from the gunner's mates. Otherwise the armoury on a Coast Guard cutter is generally strictly taboo. The gunner's mates are held accountable for the upkeep and care of all weapons in their charge. Should a pistol or rifle be found missing during the course of an inventory a board of investigation is promptly convened to inquire into the facts surrounding the disappearance, with the burden of explanation being deposited in a heavy load on the shoulders of the gunner's mates. The usual result of such an inquiry is that the custodians of the armoury are found guilty of negligence, the verdict further stipulating that they replace the missing piece of ordnance out of their own pockets.

Surfboat Joe had paid for fugitive pistols and rifles before, weapons obviously stolen from the armoury to turn up eventually in some pawnshop ashore. Not desiring further inroads to be

made in a pay reserved for more exciting pursuits ashore, he had issued strict orders to his juniors that visitations upon the part of the crew to the armoury should be strongly discouraged.

The wily Thomas well knew where his precious saxophone would be safe.

And while we were wrestling with the problem of how best to outwit him Nelander, alias the Beachcomber, was pursuing a profitable little hobby of his own.

In the course of his wanderings ashore he had once been a circus hand, spending a year beneath the big top. He still professed a fondness for his old calling and so spent much time in the society of Olaf the Ape. While others of us whiled away off-duty time by making models of sailing-ships, mats, purses and other fancy-work, the big, blond Dane would spend hours with Olaf teaching him tricks, teaching him to smoke cigarettes, teaching him to drink out of a glass and many other un-apelike idiosyncrasies.

It was not exactly nostalgia for his circus days which actuated the patient animal trainer, however.

"Just wait until we get back to Halifax," he promised. "I'll take Olaf ashore with me to the booze joints and have him steal booze for me."

"It's a good idea," Kane approved, "but not very practical. Olaf's too damned big to sneak behind a bartender and grab a bottle without bein' seen."

"Hell, it's worth tryin'," shrugged Nelander.

I had heard of and seen monkeys cleverly trained by seagoing masters, but they had invariably been diminutive in comparison to Olaf. The latter was almost waist-high, and in an unclothed state his buttocks could be seen flaring in a thick fog.

In a way, though, Nelander proved his point. He would produce cans of preserved fruits, sardines, and other delicacies at the most unexpected times. These we well knew came from the ship's store-room. He would grandly invite us to participate in the consumption of what we knew to be stolen goods. We would appreciatively accept. Yet the store-room was always under lock and key at such time as the commissary steward and

his assistant, the Jack-of-the-dust otherwise known as Ali Baba, were not issuing stores.

"Let you in on somethin'," Nelander chuckled slyly. "Sometimes Famine Levy or Ali Baba leaves the store-room porthole open, especially when the weather's good."

"Yes?"

"Well, I've trained Olaf to slip down over the side and squeeze through the port. Get it?"

We valued Olaf the more highly for his practical potentialities.

"Too bad the armoury hasn't got a porthole," mused Kane, thoughtfully consuming a slice of pineapple, fruit of Nelander's patience and Olaf's aptitude. "Maybe Olaf . . . that damn' saxophone. . . ." He chewed on his pineapple and sighed heavily.

The armoury was located well inboard, almost amidships, and had no porthole.

"General quarters!"

Buzzers ring all over the ship. Members of the gun crew take their stations. It is a warm, sunny day. The *Mobican* is closing with a dry-dock or valley type of iceberg. The continual surge of the sea has washed out a small valley between two peaks which tower majestically heavenward as if to write with icy fingers on the blue canopy of sky.

Up forward Mutt and Jeff have set up their cameras. They are to crank a demolition attempt for the thrill of movie fans ashore. Likewise are they intent on capturing on celluloid the effect of gunfire on an iceberg. We of the crew too look forward with interest to the demonstration about to take place and welcome the chance to indulge in target practice. One of the cutter's two five-inch, fifty-one calibre guns is to be used.

The forward gun is to fire eight rounds. Up on the flying bridge the range-finder operator is taking ranges on the berg ahead through his instrument, repeating them briskly to a man standing by a speaking-tube relaying the information down to the navigating bridge, where the fire-control party is doing the plotting and making allowances for the known and presumed error of the range-finder.

"Range, two thousand!" the latter barks. "Scale, fifty-four!"

The sight-setters at the other end of the speaking-tube repeat the words while setting the sights. Trainers and pointers look tensely through telescopes lining the cross-wires on one of the twin peaks.

The cutter's whistle gives a blast. A red flag is hoisted two blocks on the signal yardarm.

"Coming on the range!"

"Commence firing!" The breech-block of the five-inch gun is swung open to receive a projectile followed by a charge of smokeless powder. A flash of orange flame . . . recoil . . . reverberating concussion . . . and a huge geyser spouting from the sea as the shell falls short ricochetting its way over the horizon in a series of gigantic skips like that of a gargantuan pebble tossed by a Brobdingnagian hand.

A correction in range and deflection follows: "Range, twenty-one hundred! Scale, fifty-one!"

And a hit!

The projectile, a service shell, bores its way into the ice, bursts, sends tumbling down an avalanche of tons of ice to propel a hissing froth of cold sea into the air. Mutt and Jeff industriously wind away. Eight rounds in all are expended. Net result: a good practice for the gun crews, fine pictures for the newsreel men, and very little damage to the colossal mass of resistant ice.

The target practice over, the *Mobican* approaches to within a quarter of a mile of the berg and heaves to.

"Lower away the port surfboat!" comes the order.

We row away from the cutter's side and approach the white monster heaving gently on the long ground swell.

"Oars!" shouts Surfboat Joe. "Way enough!"

We make fast to the frigid monster and attach the wrecking charges of two hundred and fifty pounds of granulated T.N.T. to the berg just below the waterline. Not very safe work, this. Always there is the danger that the berg may lose equilibrium and capsize. Good-bye, demolition party and surfboat, should this dreaded possibility eventuate. But what a scoop for Mutt and Jeff!

We pull safely away from the berg to a distance of two hundred and fifty yards, one of Joe's assistants reeling out the wrecking cable.

"Oars!" We rest on our thwarts and watch Joe. He closes the switch. A rolling plume of black smoke is sharply visible against the white background of the iceberg. Then comes the explosion. A few more tons of ice have been calved from the impregnable mound, which seems to smile in cold contempt at our puny efforts to affect it, realizing in unassailable serenity that it will go drifting imperturbably on for several more days until it crosses over into the Gulf Stream.

Total result of our efforts: hardly anything from the standpoint of effectiveness. But Mutt and Jeff have profited in many feet of engrossing film. . . .

MUTINY!

An ugly word in any language. It raised its violent head during the closing days of our fifteen-day patrol.

On a clear day hove into sight the five-masted American schooner, *Danton*, bound from Barbados to St Johns, Newfoundland. Her ensign was inverted. Although not recognized by the International Code Book as a sign of trouble or distress, the upside-down flying of the National Ensign usually spells trouble.

The *Danton* had it—and plenty.

Captain Clark manoeuvred the cutter close off the schooner's starboard quarter.

"Anything wrong over there?" he megaphoned from the *Mohican's* bridge.

No helmsman stood at the schooner's wheel. She lay becalmed, her decks deserted, her great fore-and-aft sails flapping listlessly, her booms yawing and creaking. It was a calm sea.

The captain's hail brought no response. He had just put his glasses to his eyes to study that silent ship when two pistol shots shattered the morning's quiet. A man suddenly bounded into view on the schooner's poop-deck. Behind him rushed five others brandishing belaying-pins.

For one fleeting second the fugitive braced himself against the taffrail. He hurled his pistol at the leader of the pursuers in a last gesture of defiance and then dived overboard.

A surfboat was rapidly lowered away from the *Mohican*, manned by the starboard-watch.

Even before the man was picked up Captain Clark gave his second order. He had seen enough to convince him that the former calm on the *Danton* was deceptive and that he was up against something calling for stern measures.

"Call away an armed boarding party!"

Across to the schooner he shouted through his megaphone.

"We're going to board you! Any funny business and we'll sink you!"

"Come aboard, white trash!" came the answering jeer from one of the men on the *Danton*, who we could now see were negroes. "Come aboard if you want your haid split wid dis."

The sun glinted brightly on the blade of a fire-axe which the speaker held up for our inspection.

When "General Quarters" had been sounded on board the *Mohican* a gun's crew stood by one of the twin six-pounders back on the ship's quarterdeck. Ammunition had been brought up from below.

"Put a shot through the riggings!"

The gun captain acknowledged the order from the bridge by sending a whining shell over the sea. It left a small hole where it passed through the schooner's mainsail.

The axe-wielder on the *Danton* went racing off the poop-deck forward into the foc'sle followed by his companions.

"Make it snappy, you birds!" cried Surfboat Joe. "Down to the armoury and draw pistols!"

A ripple of excitement ran through our crew.

"Looks like we're in for a little fun," mumbled Kane eagerly, as we drew our weapons from the saxophone-playing gunner's mate. "Those niggers on that old fore-and-after look like they've run amok."

We mustered back on the quarterdeck, where we awaited the return of the surfboat which had been lowered to pick up the

fugitive from the schooner. We expected to use it for our trip to the sailing-ship, but to our surprise we were ordered to hoist it.

"I thought the Old Man was goin' to board her!" exclaimed Kane in great disappointment.

I questioned Surfboat Joe about it.

"Just leave it to our Old Man. He knows what he's doin'," he assured me. "He's an old hand at business like this. Didn't serve up in Alaska durin' the seal-peachin' days for nothin'. He knows how to handle birds like those coons aboard the schooner. Just leave it to him!"

"Boarding party, lay forward! Stand by with fenders over the starboard bow!"

The *Mohican*, gathering way upon her, now approached the *Danton*. The cutter's bows were almost level with the poop of the sailing vessel as we drew alongside her. Captain Clark had completed a manœuvre only possible in a calm or light sea.

"Away boarding party!"

We leaped down on to the schooner's poop following old Surfboat Joe forward.

Two negroes lay on one of the after-hatches. One was dead and the other obviously breathing his last. Evidently the man who had leaped into the sea had not fired his shots fruitlessly before flinging his empty gun into the face of his enemies. The still living negro moaned piteously for water when Donovan bent over him.

"Pay no attention to him!" Joe rasped. "Keep your eyes peeled for the others up forward. They may have a gun."

There were ten of us in the boarding party armed with .45-calibre automatic pistols. The odds were undoubtedly on our side even though the *Mohican* had now backed away from the schooner.

Surfboat Joe's orders were to avoid bloodshed if possible, take prisoners, then signal the cutter to lower a boat to take them off.

We paused at the door of the schooner's foc'sle.

"Come on out or we'll come in an' drag you out!" threatened Joe in a loud voice.

"Go to hell, white pig!" came the answer from within. "An' if'n you know what's good for you, you better not come in here."

"Looks like we gotta drag 'em out," said Joe. "Watch for knife-play now. If they get nasty, let 'em have it!"

Kane bestowed a mighty blow on the locked door with a fire-axe and smashed the lock. We rushed into the foc'sle's gloom. A knife whisked through the air, cut a gash in the side of George-the-Finn. He gave a grunt of pain and staggered. The negro who had thrown the knife made an effort to jump down into the chain locker. Kane beat him to it by splitting his head with the axe.

Donovan cooled the ardour of another black who swung a large carving-knife by shooting him in the arm. The rest, six in all, loudly indicated they had had enough. We prodded and herded them roughly out into the sunlight and snapped handcuffs on their wrists and leg-irons on their legs. George-the-Finn's wound was examined, and although found to be bleeding copiously did not appear to be dangerous.

"Prisoners under arrest!" Surfboat Joe hailed the waiting cutter. "One of our crowd knifed. Send the doctor over."

A boat was alongside in a few minutes to receive the prisoners and the wounded Finn.

"Couple of inches higher," said Dr Wilcoxon, ministering to him, "and we'd be putting you on ice."

"Good old son-of-a-bitch!" chuckled George appreciatively, speaking the only few words of English he knew.

Donovan drew the doctor's attention to the plight of the negro he had found wounded aft. He was dead.

"Job for the sail-maker," stated the doctor succinctly.

There were three jobs for the sail-maker—three bodies to sew up in canvas, weigh down with bags of sand tied to the feet, and drop overboard.

We left three men aboard the *Danton* and the rest of us returned to the cutter.

The lush passions of the tropics had sailed into the colder seas of the *Mobican's* patrol. That was the gripping story told by the

man we had rescued from the sea and the murderous negroes. Only two white men were aboard the schooner when she sailed sixty days before from Barbados, West Indies, her holds loaded with barrels of molasses. The captain and himself, chief mate. The rest of the crew was negro, the sweepings of the West Indies.

The cook had cleared out one day before the *Danton's* departure. A quest for his successor took another two days, for the crew, truculent even then, frankly told the captain that unless the cook's billet was filled, they too were going to be off.

The captain's hurried search for a cook along the waterfront was futile. In desperation he appealed to the ship's agents to help him.

"I think I can dig you up a cook all right," the agent had told the captain. "The man used to work for me and my family. But he just got married and doesn't wish to leave his wife. However, if you agree to sign his wife on as stewardess I'll see what I can do."

The *Danton's* master was reluctant to assent to such a suggestion, well knowing that women are likely to bring trouble aboard on a long voyage.

"It's only thirty days' run from here to St Johns," the agent argued. "Anyway, it looks like your only chance, and you'd better take it."

The ship's owners had cabled inquiring about the delay. Time was passing in tropical indifference on the part of all concerned except the troubled, weak-willed captain. Against his better judgment he capitulated and signed on the new cook and his wife. On the heels of that condescension he had to make a second. The cook refused to occupy his room off the galley, but insisted on being permitted to sleep aft with his wife. It seemed he was not disposed to expose the woman to the temptations of his fellow-blackamoors in the foc'sle.

The captain hastily agreed to all demands, eager to clear port without further procrastination. The voyage was ill-fated from the start. Still within sight of land one of the negro sailors fell from aloft while loosening a topsail just after the tug had cast

the schooner loose and hauled in the hawser. The man broke his neck and died quickly.

The other negroes objected to the captain's intention of consigning the body of their shipmate to the sea. They wished to return to port, where the seaman could be given a proper burial ashore.

The *Danton's* captain curtly refused. He ordered them to sew the dead man up in canvas for burial at sea. They wouldn't. The captain logged them all five days' pay for disobedience of orders, then delegated the mate, the man rescued by the Coast Guard cutter, to do the job.

That started the ball of mutiny rolling. The mate, bent on carrying out the captain's orders, did as he was directed and thus incurred the enmity of the crew. With scant ceremony the body in the weighted canvas was slid overboard, a rebellious, murmuring crew forward, an uneasy captain aft, and a watchful mate pacing the poop.

"It's a long story of one misfortune after another," the mate went on to tell us. "Three days out we got caught in a gale and lost a suit of sails. The crowd of blacks we had signed on didn't know their job, wouldn't try to learn, and behaved just like their kind do in a tight spot—without dependability."

The ship began to leak badly after the gale had spent itself. Captain and mate were compelled to stand over the black crew with drawn guns to force them to man the pumps, which were kept going day and night.

"Why didn't you put into some port and have the seams caulked up?" Kane wanted to know.

"I wish we had," declared our narrator fervently. "It would have saved a hell of a lot of trouble. But the Old Man refused to head for any port. I wanted him to put in at Key West, but no—he told me he was going to make St Johns if we had to pump all the way."

The seams took up a little after a week's pumping, and the crew was given a breather of a few hours a day. But still the relentless necessity of attending the pumps hung like a lash of a whip above tired, insubordinate bodies.

The crew's resentment grew. Its surly disobedience became more marked. A negro refused to go aloft one day and secure a topsail before a squall struck the ship. The captain threatened to shoot him if he didn't do as he was told. The negro answered by hurling a belaying-pin at the skipper. A shot cracked out on the smouldering deck, and the black fell, grasping his stomach. He lived for three days, his moans and hysterical ravings throwing the whole schooner into such a nervous uproar that every one shied at his own shadow. Reflex lungings for guns and knives became automatic.

When the wounded man succumbed to his injuries and the captain wanted to bury him the crew refused to turn his body over for that purpose. They insisted they were going to carry the dead man into port as Exhibit A in their lodging of charges of murder against the skipper.

To make matters worse and to stir the cauldron of simmering hatred, the blacks had a voodoo doctor among them. He was a negro who had been shipped off to England in his earlier days to receive a smattering of education and who had then returned to Barbados to lord it over his more ignorant fellows until the police put a crimp in his racket. To escape the consequences of his unsavoury life ashore he had signed on the *Danton* and became the ringleader of all the howling insanity which was hatched in the moist, sweat-dripping foc'sle. Had the captain killed that tropical agitator at the start his voyage might have been less eventful.

"But the Old Man can blame himself for what happened later," said the mate, with a shrug, throwing the burden of responsibility for subsequent events on the captain's head.

"But how did the niggers propose to carry their dead shipmate all the way to St Johns without refrigeration or embalming facilities aboard?" I asked. "A body wouldn't last long down south, particularly in hot weather."

"Yes. True!" the mate agreed. "The Old Man and I both knew that. But that voodoo expert handled the embalming problem, though we didn't find out for some time later how he went about it. And when we did," he added grimly, "what a shock!"

When they learned that the wounded negro had died the captain and the mate searched the ship from stem to stern for his body, hampered in every move by the recalcitrant crew. One did the searching while the other held off the growling mutineers with a gun. But look as they would they could not find the body. They finally concluded that the blacks were only bluffing in their threat to carry the body into port and had carried out a secret burial at night.

Meanwhile, adding to the difficulties aboard, already too many, reverse winds came to plague the *Danton*. Half the time there was no wind, and when it did blow it turned out to be a head-wind.

It took the schooner thirty days to reach the latitude of Norfolk, Virginia. The provisions ran low. The captain cut down on the food. The crew demanded that the ship be put into port and stores taken on, and to stress their point refused to stand wheel or look-out watches, take in or loose sail. The captain adamantly ignored this dictation. He made the cook and the mate roll the salt beef casks aft to the cabin from their usual stowage place under the foc'sle head while he held the threatening blacks at their distance with his gun.

The negroes particularly objected to the transfer of the salt beef casks, and under the bewitching inspiration of the voodoo doctor among them they worked themselves up to a ritualistic froth of impending mayhem.

The foc'sle vibrated with their weird chantings and hummings, the sound rising to an impassioned, hysterical crescendo seeming to make the very rigging quiver in exalted sympathy. Other times it fell away to an eerie mumbling which met and wedded with the hissing lisp of the sea slipping away from the ship's side until one could not detect where one ended and the other began. And bearing this dark cargo of black magic and murder the *Danton* lumbered along her hard-earned course, among crazy winds, driven by a half-mad skipper with a ready revolver and a mate with the jitters.

When the Old Man and the cook opened the last cask of salt-horse a few days later, the reason for the ugly resentment

of the crew invoked by the removal of the casks from the foc'sle aft was gruesomely explained.

Staring up into the captain's stricken eyes and the bulbous gape of the terrified cook was the brine-pickled face of the no-longer missing corpse!

"That damn' voodoo wizard figured that if beef or pork would stay pickled in brine for long periods," said the mate to our quietly listening group of men on the *Mohican*, "the body of a man would remain that way too. They had dumped the salt beef overboard and had put that nigger in the cask for evidence against the skipper when we reached St Johns."

I had served on one sailing-ship in South Pacific waters on a voyage from Australia to Iquique which carried meat that had been salted down twenty years before and yet was quite palatable when served. I did not, therefore, doubt the plausibility of the *Danton* mate's story. Strange, incredible, fantastic things happen at sea—but true.

"I suppose," said Donovan, "finding that negro where he expected salt beef must have given your captain quite a shock."

"It did," said the mate. "He wasn't too strong a man in character. He drank a lot and had a whole raft of petty failings and weak vices. Naturally, we dumped the cask overboard as promptly as possible. Then the Old Man began to hit the bottle in earnest. I taught the cook's wife how to handle the wheel and that helped out some, although I was half dead from lack of sleep. I was afraid to close my eyes for fear of getting a knife in my chest. A few days later one of your ships came across us and offered to put a hawser aboard and tow us in. But the skipper, drunk as a lord, told the cutter we were in no immediate need of assistance, that all we wanted was enough stores to finish the passage. The cutter gave us what she could spare, and although I would have preferred to have had her tow us in, I couldn't ride over the skipper's head. Things had quietened down somewhat in the foc'sle. With food under their belts the crew began working the ship again. All except that damn' voodoo expert. We couldn't get him out of the foc'sle. He said he was putting a curse on us all and we'd never see St Johns alive."

"Why didn't you drag him out and make him turn to?" asked Kane.

The mate shrugged helplessly.

"Me? What could I do? The Old Man stayed by himself drinking all the time and wouldn't come out on deck. It would have been worth my life to go into that foc'sle even with a gun. I might get a couple of them but they'd certainly get me."

It would seem the *Danton's* worst troubles were passed then.

"Nothing of the kind," said the mate. "The captain began to paw around the cook's wife—not a bad-looking mulatto, by any means—when the cook was working in the galley. One day I looked down the skylights and saw both of 'em with their arms draped around each other, lapping up whisky. There was no use reasoning with the Old Man. I knew him too well for that. At first they were fairly careful, making sure the cook was not around when they were laying up with each other. Then that nigger woman gets high-toned and acting cold towards her husband! Man, I could tell something was going to break, and it did. I was up on the foc'sle head when it happened. The cook had savvied to what was going on and watched his chance for me to be off the poop. He made his way aft and caught the hog-drunk captain and his sizzling skirt in a bunk together."

The mate's matter-of-fact tones gave his story intensified effect by the restraint of its telling.

"The sound of a shot brought me aft. The Old Man was dead. Not dead-drunk—but the other kind of dead where there's no sobering up. The wench looked like an abattoir of butchers had gone to work on her. The cook's kitchen knife was still sticking into her. He himself lay bleeding like a pig on the floor. He'd used the captain's gun on himself. Did I have my hands full! What happened aft had started things humming again down in the foc'sle. Voodoo work got going again. I sewed the Old Man in a gunny sack and dropped him over the side. The nigger wench and her crazy cook of a husband I just let go as they were. All this happened three days ago. If you fellows hadn't come along when you did that'd been the end of me. I couldn't have held out any longer."

"They nearly got one of our fellows over there this morning," Donovan told him, "but Kane here opened his head with an axe."

"Good thing, too!" the mate approved. "That was the damn' ringleader, I guess. I was watching for him to come aboard this cutter with the other niggers you brought in, but I didn't see him. Now, if you boys don't mind, I'd like to go back to sleep. Wake me next leap year."

A fog was coming up, the banks of white mist rolling down over the *Mobican* and the still becalmed *Danton* drifting some half-mile away from us. In the cutter's engine-room a bell clanged. The *Mobican*, getting under way at that signal, moved closer to the schooner. A towing hawser was brought up from below and passed aboard her, pending the radio instructions Captain Clark had requested from Coast Guard headquarters in far-off Washington. The reply came crackling through the ether shortly after we had taken the *Danton* in tow and were heading for St Johns, some four hundred miles to the north. "Do not leave station unless properly relieved by *Cherokee*. Suggest place enough men aboard *Danton* to complete voyage. Bury dead at sea. Keep prisoners aboard until return to Halifax."

Four seamen from each watch were placed aboard the schooner to work her into port under the command of her late chief officer, now her captain. Upon reaching St. Johns they would report to the American Consul in that port and be furnished with passage tickets back to Halifax via one of the Furness-Withy line passenger vessels and would then await the return of the *Mobican* from patrol.

Kane and I, much to our disappointment, were not included among those placed aboard the *Danton*.

■

Ten

TRAGEDY STRUCK THOMAS, THE GUNNER'S MATE OF THE *Mohican*. His wails of despair could be heard all over the ship.

"Some thieving swab swiped my saxophone, and I've only made one payment on it!"

Surfboat Joe gave scant sympathy to his subordinate.

"Well, what the hell do you expect me to do about it? Buy you another one? You an' that belly-achin' sax were a disgrace to the gunnery department. I've had some dizzy gunner's mates in my time," declared Joe emphatically, "but you take the cake—you an' that brass whistle."

"I'm going to see the Old Man about it!" Thomas insisted. "I'm going to ask him to search the ship!"

"You can go see Andy Mellon for all I care," shrugged Joe indifferently, alluding to the then Secretary of the United States Treasury, under which department the Coast Guard operates in times of peace.

Thomas regarded his superior with a suspicious eye.

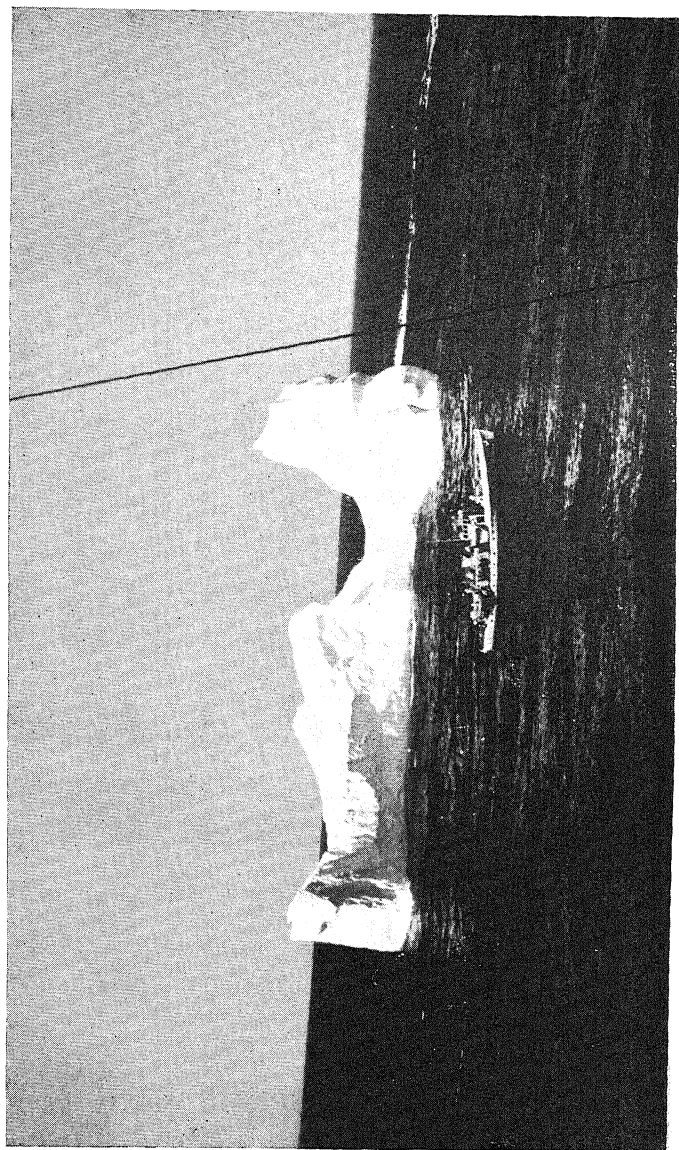
"No kidding, chief," he said. "You and I are the only guys aboard that has keys to the armoury aside from the gunnery officer, and I don't think he'd pull a stunt like that," Thomas slowly assumed.

"Oh, you don't, eh?" Joe rumbled ominously. "Are you hintin' that if the gunnery officer didn't swipe it I did?"

"I ain't saying you did," Thomas replied, "but"—he shrugged with all the implication in the world—"if only three of us has a key——"

Joe was stung by the insinuation and snarled, "I'll make you wish you'd never seen a saxophone. I've heard about all I want to from it and of it durin' this patrol. Now get down in the after magazine and clean out the bilges. An' after that's finished you can work out on the forward magazine. By that time I'll have somethin' else for you to do."

Spluttering fuses in the cutter's armoury . . . !



"GENERAL GREEN," A COAST GUARD CUTTER, PASSING AN ICEBERG



A LARGE ICEBERG SEEN FROM A COAST GUARD CUTTER

It was unfortunate for the despairing musician that he had incurred Joe's displeasure, for the latter, like all chief petty-officers, could devise varied and unpleasant tasks for the object of his ill-feeling.

Poor Thomas, for love of the musical muse, now found himself diving magazine bilges, washing paintwork, and polishing bright-work on the deck guns in cold weather. But even these subduing measures failed to dull his clamour for the return of the beloved saxophone. He sought redress from the executive officer and then searched out the highest tribunal of all, the commanding officer.

Captain Clark was an honourable man with a fine sense of fair play. Thomas was obviously upset about the loss of his instrument, and the captain decided to help him as much as he could. On the subject of the disappearing saxophone he addressed us at daily quarters—our drills.

"Gunner's Mate Thomas has complained that some man aboard, obviously a prankster, has taken his saxophone from the armoury, and hidden it. The instrument is an expensive one, and Thomas can hardly afford its loss."

An unfeeling titter ran over the assembled crew which the captain sternly quashed.

"This is no laughing matter! And while I dislike very much the idea of having the personal effects of each and every man aboard this ship searched, this I will certainly do unless the saxophone is returned to its owner, Thomas, within the next twenty-four hours. Dismissed!"

Thomas's wounds were not allowed to heal. Salt was energetically rubbed into them at every opportunity. A portable gramophone had been purchased from canteen profits and was played during the dog-watches and until lights out. We had a vast repertoire of records. Many of them had been purchased from the canteen or recreation fund before we put out to sea. Others had been stolen from brothels and blind-tigers. Variety for the diversity of musical tastes aboard was assured.

Nelander's loot from a house of assignation in Lower Barrington Street had been six records at one clip. His disappointment

was great on returning to the ship to find they were all saxophone solos by the leading musicians of the day on that instrument instead of the latest fox-trot tunes he had anticipated.

His first chagrined impulse was to hurl them overboard, for with Thomas's indefatigable bleatings aboard saxophone solos were not very popular. He decided, however, to carry them out on patrol and swap them at a record-exchange upon the return of the cutter to Halifax.

But with the strange disappearance of Thomas's prized instrument solos on the saxophone seemed to reach a new record in appeal aboard. To augment Nelander's trophies we carefully combed the whole supply of records on the cutter and excavated another dozen. Whenever Thomas put in an appearance on the berth-deck the tireless saxophone soloists would go to work.

As a result Thomas shut himself in the armoury and brooded.

The twenty-four-hour respite granted by Captain Clark before official search for the missing saxophone was begun passed without it turning up. The commanding officer, true to his threat, ordered a careful canvass of all lockers, seabags, and hammocks. Nothing faintly resembling a saxophone was discovered.

"If I knew the guy who done away with it," remarked Kane gratefully, "I'd shake his——"

"You would, would you?" snarled a furious voice behind us. We turned to see the rage-suffused face of the gunner's mate. "I've a sneaking hunch you two guys had something to do with swiping that sax from the armoury."

"You're crazy as a bat!" grinned Kane.

Drunk with misery, Thomas lashed out, catching my big, red-haired friend on the side of the head and staggering him against a bulkhead.

"Are you going to cough up that sax now?" demanded the infuriated gunner's mate.

Kane recovered his balance amiably and squared up in a business-like manner.

"I'm goin' to cough you up," he informed Thomas cheerfully. A crowd had quickly gathered. Space was cleared for the combatants. Surfboat Joe volunteered to act as referee.

Thomas was no undersized specimen, by any means. He was a rugged, thick type of man, not so tall as Kane or as broad in the shoulder, but a very capable-looking individual.

Kane's left hand travelled about six inches before making contact with Thomas's chin. Joe counted the passing seconds slowly, eyeing the prone gunner's mate in the fading hope that he would get to his feet and absorb more punishment. But Thomas was beyond persuasion for the next three minutes. When he did lurch to his feet to stand rocking uncertainly Kane had already strolled away, the crowd had dispersed, and there was only a very disgusted old chief gunner to give him a verbal lashing for his pains.

"You should have saved some of your wind for fighting instead of blowin' out your lungs on that saxophone. You're a disgrace to the gunnery department. An' now get up on deck and manicure the forward five-inch gun!"

The case of the missing saxophone was cleared up a week later by Nelander at Sticks' Place when we reached Halifax. He hiccuped out the news the entire thing had been Olaf's doing.

"Olaf's a clever monk," admitted Donovan, "but he's too bulky to go through the keyhole of the armoury door."

"Didn't have to," Nelander sniggered, patting the ape's head affectionately as the latter sat beside him. The two had become inseparable companions. "Remember that air-shaft that leads down to th' armoury from behind the bridge?"

"Yes," said Donovan, and then pointed out, "But that's a small shaft with straight sides and no gripping surface. How could Olaf possibly climb down there and back up? And how," Donovan pressed, "would he know what to get when he got down there?"

Nelander laughed drunkenly. "I lowered him down on a line. Course," he confessed, shakily pouring himself another generous drink, "I had t'make him take half-dozen tripsh until he brought up the sax. At first he brought up pistols an' rifles. But at last he laid hish hands on that god-damn' sax. I made him put the pishtols and rifles back."

"And what did you do with the instrument?" Donovan questioned, amused.

"Gave that the deep six," Nelander chortled. "Figgered ol' Davy Jones might want to amuse himself playin' on it on wet nightsh."

"You threw it overboard?" Donovan was taken aback at this summary disposal.

"Di'n't wan' take no chance that goddam Thomas gettin' hol' of it again," said Nelander. Proudly he added, "Ain't no fliesh on Olaf. He'sh shmart. An' if you don't believe me—watch! What'll you have—rum, whisky, or beer?"

"Rum," said Donovan.

"Whisky," said Kane.

"Beer," I said.

Nelander whispered a few words to the adoring, attentive Olaf and the latter was off. He slithered between the legs of the dancers scattered about the floor of Sticks' Place and was lost to sight behind the bar. A few moments later he returned with a full quart bottle of rum beneath his arm. Nelander displayed it triumphantly. The bartender was unaware of his loss. Olaf had been trained as well to retrieve half-empty bottles of liquor from the tables and booths of drunken patrons of the blind-tiger.

"This Olaf beats anythin' I've ever seen," said Kane admiringly. "Look as though the Beachcomber can stay drunk from now on just as long as he has Olaf with him."

It was a destiny to which Nelander happily assured us he would conscientiously dedicate himself.

The day we reached Halifax Kane, Donovan, Nelander, and myself called on Preacher Mason at the Victoria General Hospital, but he was out.

"He's been up and around for a week now," we were told, "and most likely will be discharged in a few days. He's been out on a pass for the last three afternoons."

Beside our convalescent shipmate's bed was a vase of fresh flowers.

Kane gave them an approving glance and said, "Well, I see Marie's keepin' up the good work. But personally," he grinned,

"I'd rather have a pint of Sticks' rum than flowers if I was laid up in dry-dock."

"Guess Mason's taking in a movie," hazarded Donovan.

"Or a psalm-singin' get-together," Nelander threw in.

We left the hospital and decided to take a stroll through the beautiful Halifax Public Gardens, for it was still early in the afternoon. Spring had arrived, and the eighteen acres of beautifully laid-out grounds which comprised the gardens were a riot of gay blooms, bright shrubbery, and intoxicating fragrance, the latter a boon to nostrils monopolized by ship's odours during the past twenty-one days at sea.

Donovan drew in a deep breath and sighed.

"Reminds me of Ireland in the spring."

"Yeah, it's pretty all right," Kane agreed absently. "Let's get down to Sticks' Place and have a drink. My tonsils are rusty after three weeks of coffee and water."

"You said it!" the ready Nelander corroborated. "Let's get going."

"It's early yet," I said, and squirmed under Kane's outraged regard.

"It's never early for a drink. What's come over you? Not gettin' soft, are you? You used to be able to drink your share."

I made my blunt confession.

"I promised Gertrude I'd stay sober to-night."

"Gertrude?" Kane looked at me amazed while Nelander stopped dead in his tracks to look at me askance. Donovan whistled quietly. "What do you mean? Don't tell me you're stuck on some dame an' haven't piped to your shipmates? First thing you'll know," prophesied my friend in horror, "you'll be gettin' yourself spliced, an' we'll have to be findin' our fun without you. Tell us about her. Who is she?"

"Some other time."

"Talkin' about women reminds me," Kane suddenly bethought. "I've got a girl-friend in Halifax. Let's go down to Marie's apartment an' see if she's in."

"Not me," said Nelander. "I'll see you guys up at Sticks'."

"I'm coming with you, Beach," called Donovan after him. The two waved farewell and turned away, Nelander still regarding me reproachfully.

Kane and I set our steps for Eskimo Marie's abode.

We had been preceded by another guest. After climbing the creaky flight of steps we halted outside the door of Marie's modest quarters from the interior of which we could hear voices. One of them was masculine. Kane frowned.

"Wait," I restrained him. "Sounds like Preacher Mason's voice. Quiet—listen!"

The *Mobican's* religionist was speaking in earnest tones.

"The wages of sin is death, Marie. So says the good book. The devil is always abroad looking for souls!"

And Marie's responding sensual slur: "You're a nice boy, Mason, but don't prattle like that to me. Just keep it to yourself, and don't waste breath trying to steer me back to the straight and narrow. I've been on the high, wide, and handsome too long."

"It's never too late for redemption. Remember Mary Magdalene was a prostitute of the lowest order——"

"Easy on the eyewash," was Marie's mild retort. "I've heard all about that in Sunday school. Besides," with justifiable pride, "I ain't any common prostitute. Anyway, it's time you were getting back to the hospital."

"Fancy that top-heavy Bible-thumper tryin' to reform Marie," Kane growled. "Come on in."

He turned the door-knob and threw open the door. Preacher Mason was lying on the sofa, his Bible in his hand, a bandage still enwrapping his head. Eskimo Marie sat in an easy-chair facing him. On the table were the remnants of supper.

The woman got to her feet with a glad little cry at our entrance.

Kane embraced her and kissed her heartily. "How's tricks, sweetheart?"

Preacher Mason, I noticed, winced at the robustness of Kane's and Marie's greeting.

"You just got back in time, Big Boy," the latter laughed. "Preacher here is trying to make a Salvation Army lassie out of

me. How would I look banging a tambourine and begging drunken sailors to put another penny in it?"

"You'd look good to me doin' anythin'," Kane chuckled. "But what have you got to drink?" he asked. "I'm thirsty."

"I'll put on a fresh pot of tea."

"Tea!" Some of Kane's good humour vanished. "Tea!" He wrinkled his nose. "Damn' if I don't think we got here too late at that an' Preacher's done got in his dirty work!"

I went over to Mason. "Don't mind," I said. "Ginger's only kidding. You're looking much better than when we last saw you, Preacher."

"Thanks, Bart. I'm feeling better. And Marie has been very good to me. That has helped me so much."

"What time does your hospital pass expire? Want us to drive you back in a taxi?"

"I've a late pass to-night, thanks. Not due in until nine. I'm going down to that Bible meeting at the Seamen's Mission for a little while. The old man who runs it has been nice to me, too. He'll see me back to the hospital." He got to his feet. "Guess I'd better be going."

I knew Kane and Marie would like to be left alone, and since I had an appointment of my own I offered to walk as far as the mission with Mason.

"Thanks, Bart. Good-night, Marie—Kane."

Though I had been unusually reticent where my shipmates were concerned about my own romance in Halifax, perhaps for once in my life I had been struck by a full and felling force. It may have been retribution for the ignoble rôle I had played in Captain Milton's matrimonial débâcle. Certainly it played as much havoc with me as his did with him.

Gertrude Cohen was of orthodox Jewish extraction. My acquaintance with that dark-eyed race of people had been limited to one experience with a lovely creature I had met in the Jewish village of Richon, in Palestine, during the Great War while a member of the Australian Light Horse Brigade resting there. And on that occasion I had only been a disinterested witness to the peccadillo of a soldier friend of mine who became embroiled in

some romantic difficulties with her. But now that I found myself enslaved by a woman of that mystic people I was to discover certain elements of racial character hitherto unknown to me.

Gertrude had come to Halifax from Digby, Nova Scotia, to work in a small seamen's outfitting store run by her uncle, a bearded orthodox Jew. On the few occasions when I had seen him, while in his niece's company, he showed no great warmth towards me.

He was frank in confiding the reason for his disapproval.

"All sailors are alike. Here to-day, gone to-morrow. I've seen, met, and traded with thousands of them since I've been in Halifax, especially during the War. Good spenders when they've got it, but how long do they have it?"

I had met his niece during the *Mohican's* first in-port period in Halifax when I entered the uncle's shop to buy a new pair of seaboots and a sou'wester. Gertrude had served me. We struck up a conversation. When she learned I was an Australian by birth and not long from that continent she was most interested. Out of that talk had come a date for the movies. Others followed, secret *tête-à-têtes*, dinners in quiet restaurants, more movies, all unbeknown to her uncle and aunt. On each successive meeting my ardour burned the more fiercely. So consuming did it become that I actually paid several calls to the Halifax library to read about the Jewish people as a race in an effort to find some possible key to their philosophy which might assist me in winning the favour of Gertrude's uncle and aunt.

But I was still a sailor, and Uncle Reuben had definite, unyielding opinions on that point.

After I left Preacher Mason at the Seamen's Mission I made quick steps for the restaurant in Hollis Street where I had arranged to meet Gertrude in a note I sent by messenger as my first duty upon coming ashore earlier in the day.

"It's good to see you back," she welcomed me quietly. For all the undemonstrativeness of that greeting I knew she spoke the truth. "Three weeks seemed so long."

"I'm glad to see you again, Gertrude." Not very sparkling

dialogue, but are two average people in love capable of shining in their interchange of thought?

"I thought of you often during the long night-watches at sea," I told her.

"I have some unpleasant news," she said. "I really hate to tell you about it."

"Forget it," I advised. "Let's have some fun first."

"I suppose it can wait," she said, smiling none too happily.

When we finished our dinner I suggested a movie, but Gertrude overruled me.

"Let's take a ride out to Point Pleasant Park for a change."

We caught a tram-car in Barrington Street and rode out to Young Avenue, where we disembarked and entered the main gate of the park. We walked slowly, arm-in-arm, for it was a warm evening. Overhead the trees yearned towards each other on both sides of the pathway in a natural archway. We settled ourselves on a bench overlooking the North-west Arm with its three miles of wooded beach looking out upon twinkling harbour lights.

"This place is much too nice in which to hear bad news, but let's have it and get it over with," I said.

"I'm going home next week," Gertrude faltered.

I was too dismayed to say anything for the moment.

"I think Uncle Reuben has something to do with it," she surmised. "He suspects we meet secretly like this, although he hasn't said as much. Anyhow, my father and mother insist I return."

I digested this information, but found it unpalatable.

"Halifax won't be the same without you, Gert."

She snuggled up to my shoulder and inspired within me so potent a wave of protectiveness that I tingled from head to foot. My arms went round her, and I drew her close to me.

"Do you mean it?" she asked in a whisper.

"I love you, Gert."

She gave a little throaty chuckle of pleasure.

"The funny part of it is," she said, "I believe you! But what can we do about it?" she sighed.

"There's nothing much I can offer you on my pay as a Coast-guardman even if you were disposed to marry me," I replied. "And of that I'm not sure."

Her breath fanned my cheek. "Practicability is a vice among parents of marriageable daughters of our race. It isn't always love that counts. My parents wish me to marry a Jewish boy who has a tailor's shop back in Digby." Her words were smothered in my shoulder. "Oh, I hate to think that after next week we'll probably never see each other again!"

"I haven't done much with my life so far," I told her, "but it may be different some day."

"But by the time you've served out your enlistment in the Coast Guard I'll probably be married," she said unhappily.

The protected waters of the North-west Arm of the park spread out before us, molten silver in the moonlight. An owl hooted melancholy sympathy with my troubles from a branch of a near-by tree. How was I to hurdle the seemingly insuperable obstacles of a deplored social status, a shaky economic condition, and race prejudice to attain my beloved little Jewess? It was a problem with which I racked my rusty brains.

"Marry me, Gertrude," I broke out impulsively.

She drew in her breath with a little hiss. "But—my people," she said feebly.

"They'd resign themselves after it was done."

"But we couldn't live on your present pay."

"Perhaps your uncle would let you stay on at the store here in Halifax," I said. "With what you make added to my pay we would be able to squeeze by."

"You know how he feels about sailors." My spirits dropped another notch. "Much as I hate the thought it looks like I'll have to go back home."

I drew a deep breath of resolve. "Gertrude, take me as I am and marry me."

I awaited her delayed response with wildly beating heart.

It came after what seemed an interminable period, a whispered word that imparted ecstasy to my perspective of the world. The moon smiled broadly in matriarchal benignity to the winking

water on which lay her golden imprint, while the muted spring night wind seemed to whisper a soft blessing of her own. Or maybe I was just terribly in love.

"My better judgment tells me not to, Paul, but——" Did the rustling leaves say it? The soft, musical lap of calm waters on a moon-bathed shore?

"—yes."

Our arms tightened about each other. Footsteps crunched the gravel and a heavy but apologetic voice intruded.

"You two had better get back to town," said the policeman. "It's pretty late to be out here."

I left Gertrude a block or two from the apartment she shared with her aunt and uncle in Water Street and then returned to the *Mobican* walking on air.

A general muster was held on the first Saturday after we reached Halifax. Impeccable in our uniforms, we lined the quarterdeck in a double rank to be inspected by Captain Clark. He was pleased with our smart appearance and commended us. Then came what is known in the Service as "Rocks and Shoals"—a period during which those who have run foul of courts have the verdicts read off to them. At last those of us who had participated in the epic hot-cakes battle some time before would know what punishment we had drawn.

The executive officer shuffled a sheaf of papers in his hands and began, "Edward Kane, Seaman, First Class, two paces forward—march!"

Kane stepped out of the front rank, saluted smartly, and snapped to attention.

"Kane," intoned the executive officer, "you were found guilty of wilfully throwing hot-cakes about the berth-deck on the morning of February 22, thereby rendering said cakes unfit for use, by a summary court which has sentenced you to forfeit ten dollars in pay. However," added the officer, "in view of your extraordinary heroism in performing a deed of valour on an earlier occasion the court has recommended the fine be remitted in your case."

I had almost forgotten the occasion responsible for this official

acknowledgment, the fight between Kane and Nelander over Eskimo Marie during which the Dane had been knocked overboard and rescued from drowning by my red-haired friend.

The executive officer was not done.

"I have a surprise for you, Kane," he stated, referring to the typewritten sheet in his hand. "Apparently your heroism has not gone unnoticed in Washington." He read aloud from the paper he held.

"TREASURY DEPARTMENT,

"WASHINGTON

"May 2, 1922

"EDWARD KANE, *Seaman, First Class*

"UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

"SIR:

"There is transmitted to you to-day, under separate cover, a silver Life Saving Medal of Honour awarded to you by this Department under Acts of Congress in recognition of your service in bravely rescuing a shipmate from drowning on January 29, 1922. It affords this Department great pleasure to have this opportunity of commending the service rendered by you on the occasion mentioned."

The signature was that of an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury. Captain Clark walked over to where Kane was still standing. In his hand he held a large leather-covered case from which he produced a blue-ribboned medal. He pinned it on Kane's bulging chest.

Extending his hand and shaking Kane's, the captain said, "It gives me great pleasure in delivering this medal to you. You have proved yourself a worthy Coastguardman by living up to the best traditions of our service."

"Thank you, sir," Kane managed to mumble.

A Life Saving Medal of Honour is a much prized decoration in the Coast Guard, Navy, Army, and Marine Corps, one that is only awarded after due deliberation by a Treasury Department Board in Washington, D.C.

My turn was next. The executive officer read out:

"COAST GUARD HEADQUARTERS,
"WASHINGTON, D.C.

"April 27, 1922

"From COMMANDANT, U.S.C.G.

"To PAUL BART, SEAMAN, FIRST CLASS, U.S.C.G.

"Subject: SUMMARY COURT.

"IN view of the findings of a SUMMARY COURT before which you were tried on charges of wilfully throwing hot-cakes about the berth-deck of the U.S. COAST GUARD CUTTER *Mohican* on the morning of February 22nd, thereby rendering said hot-cakes unfit for use, you were found guilty of both charges. It is the sentence of this court that you forfeit ten dollars in pay, the fine to be remitted if your subsequent behaviour entitles you to the issuance of an HONOURABLE DISCHARGE upon the expiration of your enlistment."

Captain Milton, the *Mohican's* usurer, and the Bugler followed in respective succession. Their sentence was identical with mine. Altogether we had come out pretty well from the hot-cakes fracas. Had the court so desired I could have lost twenty days' pay. Now all I had to do was behave myself for the balance of my enlistment—still two years and eight months to run—and I would receive the ten dollars with my Honourable Discharge.

I had a feeling, however, that I had seen the last of that money.

Upon dismissal we crowded around Kane to congratulate him. Nelander was even prouder of Kane's decoration than its owner. Rather obscurely he seemed to reason he had earned the medal for Kane by getting himself knocked overboard.

"Take good care of it," he urged Kane gravely. "I may want to borrow it sometime."

One morning we had a visit from a scarlet-coated member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. He brought with him one of our men—a sheepish Pelican Pete just back from an enforced cruise aboard a British ship of war from Bermuda.

In addition to their duties of patrolling the vast wilderness of the Canadian outpost country, the Mounties are also charged with the policing of His Majesty's Royal Canadian Dockyard in Halifax. A troop of them were stationed there, and a smart,

military-looking group they were when they turned out for inspection. Aloof and reserved at all times, they were a constant enigma to us. They were civil enough to the crews of ships berthed in the dockyard, but never fraternized. We seemed never to be able to find where they kept themselves when off duty. Sticks' Place never saw any of them nor did other sundry drinking places where sailors and soldiers were wont to gather. To invite one of them to take a drink while in the dockyard was reserving immediate accommodation in the brig on a diet of bread and water for a few days.

Pelican Pete did not stay long in Bermuda, for shortly after his involuntary arrival there a Canadian destroyer sailed for Halifax after shooting her spring target practice. Pete sailed back with her.

Aboard the *Mobican* the enforced holiday-maker found himself arraigned on a multitude of charges. The most prominent of them included drunkenness, threatening a British sailor with a deadly weapon, misrepresenting himself by wearing the uniform of another Power, overstaying his leave, etc., etc.

"It was all a joke," Pete uncomfortably tried to explain to stern-looking Captain Clark.

"You have a weird sense of humour, Pulaski," retorted the commanding officer, addressing Pete by his surname. "And was this idea of threatening a British sailor with a firearm a joke, too?"

"We had a few drinks together," said Pete, "and when I showed him a water-pistol the Limey got scared. I thought it would be a good joke to swap uniforms," Pete continued uncertainly, quailing before the captain's grim stare, "and—and——"

"A water-pistol?"

"That's all, sir!" insisted Pete eagerly. He dug into his jumper and produced the weapon. It was of a type purchasable in any toy-shop.

Captain Clark shook his head commiseratingly. "You seem to have a juvenile mind, Pulaski. It's a wonder you didn't buy a rattle while you were at it. I'd suggest something more elevating

in a literary way than gangster stories and Wild West novels for your future consumption. Meanwhile," the captain told him sternly, "you will be tried by a general court for your frivolous conduct unbecoming to a Coastguardman, and you will also be obligated to pay for your subsistence while aboard the British ship which took you to Bermuda, for the time you spent there, and for the voyage back to Halifax on the Canadian destroyer."

Pelican Pete would draw no pay for many moons. Pete's one impression of his escapade which he brought back with him was the lack of food he had to contend with for one of his enormous capacity while with the respective units of the British Navy.

"Those Limey ships are all hungry wagons. I could never get enough to eat, even when I was helpin' the cook in the galley. Boy, am I glad to be back here where I can get a good feed once in a while."

His enthusiasm was not shared by Famine Levy, the ship's commissary steward.

"Just when I'm getting a good surplus in the general Mess that chow-hound turns up!" he wailed.

Three days before Gertrude Cohen was to leave Halifax we decided to be married. When I suggested a civil wedding to her she demurred.

"At least, let us be married by a Rabbi," she entreated.

Mullah, priest, minister, or registrar—it made little difference to me who performed the ceremony. I was conscious of the probable reluctance of a Rabbi to officiate at the wedding of a Jewess and a Gentile, and mentioned the fact to Gertrude.

"I know a Rabbi out on Spring Garden Road who may marry us," she told me. "He has married mixed couples in the past that I know of."

I delayed no longer. A marriage licence was procured, and then came a visit to the Rabbi who lived in Spring Garden Road and whose doctrinal convictions were elastic.

For all his liberal instincts he did not surrender without expressing adverse comment.

"I make it a point," he said frankly, "to discourage marriages between persons of my faith and outsiders. Very little good

usually comes from these unions, and there seems to be unhappiness in store for both parties." He then called me into another room of his little house and asked me pointblank whether I had been circumcised. I told him my parents had fortuitously attended to that detail during my infancy in Australia. He seemed sceptical. I convinced him to his satisfaction that I had not exaggerated.

Reluctantly he agreed to marry us on the following evening.

I confided in Kane only of all the men aboard the *Mohican*. He glumly consented to be my best man.

Scrubbed, shined, and sober, we presented ourselves at Rabbi Lipski's home. For the eventful occasion I had bought myself a suit of civilian clothes, although Kane was in his uniform. While the Rabbi called me aside to coach me in the prayers I was to repeat after him in Hebrew beneath the *chuppa*, or ceremonial canopy, my bride was being ministered to by the Rabbi's buxom wife, who had generously supplied her with the veil which she herself had been married in many years before. Gertrude's large, liquid eyes were shining with excitement, her full, well-modelled lips tremulous with an emotion which began to infect me as well.

Fate seemed to have little sympathy for my eagerness and nervousness. The ceremony was delayed by the non-appearance of two of the four men-friends of the Rabbi who were expected to be present to hold up the *chuppa* under which ritual demanded the wedding should take place. Hurried telephone calls to their homes resulted in the information both had been called out of town. Already an hour had been wasted.

Kane came to the rescue with a suggestion.

"Why not call up Sticks' Place and see if we can get a couple of our crowd to hold up the tent or whatever you call that thing?"

"*Chuppa*," said Rabbi Lipski.

"Looks like a pup-tent puttin' on the dog," Kane grunted, still apparently ruffled by my action which he persisted in regarding as a piece of superfluous romantic impetuosity.

A telephone call was put through to Sticks'. Nelander and Donovan promised to come over. It seemed an interminable

period before they arrived, and, judging from the air of extreme good fellowship radiating in alcoholic waves from them both, I would have preferred others in their places. Nelander had brought along the inseparable Olaf with him.

"Why the hell did you have to bring that monk along?" asked Kane, cognizant of the bad taste of Nelander's action, as he eyed the restive Olaf, who I did not doubt had been partaking of Sticks' liquid hospitality with the assiduity of his self-imposed master.

"What if he got lost?" asked Nelander, horrified at the thought. "Some guys off a Limey ship had their eyes on him. I didn't want to take any chances on him bein' kidnapped."

Donovan eyed me through a quiet haze of his own.

"Sorry to see you end up like this, ol' man," he said mournfully, shaking my hand compassionately.

Rabbi Lipski eyed the newcomers doubtfully, and seemed genuinely perturbed by Olaf's presence as he worriedly stroked his beard.

"Do you think these two friends of yours are sober enough to hold up the *chuppa*?" he asked anxiously. "And that monkey—*ach!* They shouldn't have brought him along!"

Frantic to get the ceremony over and done with in the face of the obstacles, human and circumstantial, which seemed malignantly rearing before me, I hastily assured him everything would be all right and urged him to proceed without further loss of time. One of his daughters volunteered to be bridesmaid for Gertrude.

Flanked on one side by the unsteady Nelander and Donovan holding up their end of the *chuppa* over our heads, and on the other by the two co-religionists of the Rabbi, with Olaf wrapping himself like a vine round one of my legs, the service got under way. Gertrude never looked prettier than she did standing at my side beneath the bridal veil. The *chuppa* waved uncertainly over our heads now and then as Nelander or Donovan swayed on his feet, but things were going along swimmingly until Olaf disengaged himself from my leg and in one leap climbed up Nelander's back and perched himself right on top of the *chuppa*

itself. It was unable to bear his weight and ripped in half, almost depositing the falling Olaf on top of me.

"*Oi!*" cried the outraged Rabbi. "Get this—this *schlimmuzzel* out of here!" He refused to continue his office until Olaf was removed from the room. More delay, for Olaf refused to be parted from Nelander, but finally amid considerable confusion, profanity, feminine squeals, and general uproar he was coaxed from the room and given into the custody of the taxi-driver who awaited Gertrude and me outside in the street with his conveyance.

The wedding continued. I found the ceremony to be replete with odd ritualism and a symbolism which at the time had little meaning for me. Wine was passed to my bride and me. I muttered unintelligible Hebrew words after the Rabbi. The glass from which we drank was thrown to the floor, and I was compelled to crush it beneath my heel. Gertrude told me later the action commemorated the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem by the Romans under Titus.

Kane also was very intrigued by the ceremonial rigmarole, and thawed a little towards the thought of my marriage in view of his philosophy that it was permissible to try any unusual experience once.

The evening seemed to have been bewitched for me. I could not do the simplest things without enormous complications rising therefrom. In a desire to respect Gertrude's Uncle Reuben's guardianship of my wife in Halifax I telephoned him the news of our union immediately it was sanctified. Instead of the blessing which I expected I received a furious barrage of curses, the bulk of them in expressive Yiddish.

I had already engaged a room in a hotel in Hollis Street for two days, and after leaving the Rabbi's house we all went down there, where I treated Kane, Donovan, and Nelander to a wedding dinner. Later Gertrude and I saw a movie.

It was late when we returned to the hotel. I was somewhat fatigued, for the evening had been most strenuous. It was a relief to look forward to some hours of relaxation. But it was not to be so.

An eloquent delegation of my wife's gesticulative relatives

awaited us there. Cousins, aunts, uncles, nephews, and nieces swarmed all over the place, completely submerged us with recriminations, dire prophecies of matrimonial travail, and salty Yiddish opinions.

My temper had become short. I called the hotel detective and told him I was being annoyed by the bombastic pack. With some difficulty, and assisted by several other hotel employees, he induced the vilifying relatives to vacate the premises. Gertrude and I crept away to our room.

Early in the morning the telephone rang.

"Is that Mr Bart?" asked a quiet voice. I assured the speaker it was. "This is Mr Cohen, Gertrude's father," I was then told. "I have just gotten in from Digby. May I speak with my daughter, please?"

I handed the telephone to my wife. "Your father. Just got in from Digby. Somebody must have sent him a wire about us."

After a long conversation in Yiddish she hung up, turned to me, and broke into sobs. "He's coming over to see us in a few minutes."

I mustered what resolution I had at that early hour to face the forthcoming ordeal. Contrary to my expectations, I did not have to deal with an explosive personality.

"I wish you every happiness," said Gertrude's father surprisingly. He was a little old man, with a neat Vandyke beard, meticulously clean and quiet-spoken. His eyes were red, and I surmised that he, with facile Hebraic sentiment, had been weeping. His greeting to Gertrude was most affectionate. "I have never had the pleasure of meeting you before, Mr Bart," he said. "And although my heart is filled with sorrow at the unexpectedness of all this, I believe you will make Gertrude a good husband, even though you are not one of our people."

I was grateful for his tolerance. I thanked him warmly.

"You may be sure I shall try very hard," I promised. "Under the circumstances."

"Oh, yes, the circumstances," he reminded himself. "From what my brother has told me you hardly earn enough to support my daughter, I believe?"

"I can keep on working for a while, Poppa," Gertrude interjected eagerly. "Until Paul gets out of the Service. I suppose Uncle will let me keep on at the store."

"Two years is a long time to wait," Mr Cohen reflected. "I have a better plan, I think."

I was interested.

"Let Gertie come back to Digby with me," he suggested. "You continue in the Coast Guard until your time is up, save your money, and then join us back home and help me in my laundry business."

I was no longer interested.

"I don't think I possess any aptitude for the laundry business," I replied. "Gertie and I can manage to live here in Halifax until the Ice Patrol season is over——"

"And when it is over?" he said.

"We'll have enough money for Gertrude's fare back to the States with me."

He shook his head sadly, disapprovingly. "Foolish, foolish young man, Mr Bart. No good will come of this marriage unless you do as I urge——"

I was taken aback when Gertrude sided with her father.

"Poppa is right, Paul. He knows best what we should do."

"I'm looking out for you now," I said, somewhat incensed. "I married you, not your family."

"But——"

Recollection of all I had gone through to attain my present state flooded over me, inflicted me with a hot sense of unrewarded sacrifice.

"If you go back to Digby with your father you go out of my life," I said, with dramatic impetuosity.

Gertrude went back to Digby that night with her father.

A week later I received notification that our marriage had been annulled.

"We all make chumps out of ourselves over women at times," Kane consoled me sagely. "Let's have a drink!"

And although he did not know it, Captain Milton, the *Mohican's* Midas, was amply avenged.

Eleven

THE HEART OF HALIFAX WAS WITHIN CONVENIENT reach of the *Mohican's* berth at the dock of the Western Union Telegraph Company. It was situated at the foot of George Street. This was an arrangement which met with the wholehearted approval of our crew, although since it was only by courtesy of the communications company that we were permitted to be there, and we were obliged to move elsewhere whenever a cable ship came in, it was an uncertain anchorage.

The cable ship *Lord Kelvin* stood in from sea and chased us out of our snug berth. There being no other dock then available and not caring to anchor out in the harbour, Captain Clark brought us down to His Majesty's Royal Canadian Dockyard at the extreme end of Barrington Street and far from our grazing grounds ashore. This was an arrangement which did not meet with the wholehearted approval of our crew.

While berthed at the dockyard we were compelled to abide by the many regulations which governed the conduct of the crews of vessels moored there. To see that we did, a detachment of scarlet-jacketed Royal Canadian Mounted Police were held strictly responsible. One of the numerous and annoying restrictions was the deadline hour we had to keep if we wished to spend the night aboard. If we were later than 1 A.M. in getting in we were kept outside the dockyard until 6 A.M. The colourful Mounties charged with the enforcement of this irksome regulation carried it out to the letter. Superfluous all cajoleries, coaxes, pleas.

Nor would bribery work. Nelander tried it one night with a pint of Sticks' best rum expertly purloined by Olaf. The Mountie, a hulking, impressive figure, smashed the bottle and threatened to place Nelander under arrest if he made any attempt to pass through the gate. He also intimated that he would report him to the commanding officer of the cutter for the attempted corruption of one of His Majesty's loyal servants.

"Can you beat that?" moaned the tall Dane, recounting the incident to us later. "I've never run across such a duty-struck crowd in my life. I thought the Marines of our navy yards were bad enough down in the States, but these Mounties take the cake. Wouldn't have been so bad if he'd have given me back that bottle of rum," he said morosely. "But to smash it before my eyes!" It was a cardinal sin which caused Nelander's blood to seethe.

The unbending guard kept by the supercilious Mounties was reinforced by a patrol of highly trained, sharp-fanged German police-dogs. These animals accompanied them on their periodic rounds of the dockyard. To attempt to climb over the stone fence was to invite disaster. The police were not above firing a shot over your head and the second round at you if you failed to stop, and the dogs seemed to relish the chance of charging at you with all teeth bared.

One night towards the end of our in-port period we discovered indications of Surfboat Joe's surrender to failing stamina and advancing age. We came across him at Sticks' Place deep in his cups and in the throes of weeping intoxication. To see that redoubtable gladiator in life's arena thus allergic to his potations was like seeing the action of the Gulf Stream on the colossal icebergs we ran across on patrol—disintegration of the seemingly imperishable.

"What's he bawlin' about?" Kane wondered audibly.

"Looks like he needs a good jab of cheer," I said. "Let's go over."

Donovan approved, Nelander nodded agreement, and we descended on our venerable chief gunner's mate and seated ourselves at his table with gay greetings.

"What seems to be troubling you, Joe?" I asked.

"The girls' haven't got your number, have they?" boomed Kane. "Don't tell me you haven't got one lined up for the night!"

Joe turned his tear-streaked face towards us.

"It ain't dames I'm studyin'," he confessed chokily. "It's their souls!"

"Dames' souls!" Kane echoed incredulously.

"No," wept Joe. "Ships'!"

"Ships!" Donovan muttered, exchanging a puzzled glance with me.

"I've been in the Service twenty-nine years now," said Joe, with a voluminous sigh, "an' in one more year I'll be returned and put on the shelf for life——"

"You rate it," said Kane. "Thirty years is a long time to spend in——"

"They came to me in a dream last night," Joe sobbed afresh, shakily reaching for a large mug of beer at his elbow and gurgling drearily into its frothy contents. "All the souls of the ships I've blown up in me time. Ships have souls, y'know," he stated mournfully over the top of his drink. He swallowed the last of the beer and wiped both his streaming eyes and wet mouth on the back of his brown hand. "They've come to haunt me now. There was the *Doris Kellum*," he recalled lugubriously. "A five-masted schooner out of Mobile." He gulped down the rising sobs which threatened to bog articulation. "She was the first one I blew up, an' as dainty a vessel she was as ever sailed the sea, a fine piece of sailin' craft as ever a sailor could fall in love with." He pounded his thick chest with a large fist, replete with contrition and misery. "It hurt me to blow her up—it's hurt me to blow 'em all up. But what could I do?" he wanted to know piteously. "I was told to do it. Ships have souls, an' now they're gangin' up on me. There was the time I blew up the full-rigger *Bay of Naples* off Key West."

Joe's discourse became a bit rambling and vague.

"Let's get him back to the *Mohican*," Kane whispered. "Looks as though the silly old cannoneer is on the verge of the horrors."

"You shouldn't feel so badly about destroying those ships, Joe," I tried to console him, for his sobs were mounting and he was attracting the attention of other patrons of the blind-tiger. "After all, it was in the line of your duty, and derelicts must be destroyed to make the sea safe for navigation."

"All right for you to say that," Joe wept, his words muffled by the hands he placed over his face. "You've never had to do it.

I was the executioner—I was the hangman that pulled the lever an' sent their pretty souls to Davy Jones' locker."

With Donovan and Nelander lending ready assistance we hauled Joe to his feet and walked him into the street, where we hailed a taxi. The mounted policeman standing on sentry-go at the entrance to the dockyard refused to let us in with our burden. Joe had passed out on us.

"You'll have to carry him back up town again," he told us inexorably.

"But it isn't one o'clock yet," I protested.

"I'm not admitting any drunks to the dockyard. Wait until he sobers up," the Mountie snapped.

"The man is sick," I said. "Have a heart! We want to carry him aboard so our doctor can attend him."

"You're not taking him in here in that condition. Lug him back to town and let him sleep it off. You sailors are a nuisance. Why can't you stay sober for a change?"

We withdrew from the vicinity of the entrance to the dockyard for a conference.

"Let's hoist him over the fence," Kane suggested. "Between the four of us we can do it, high as it is."

Donovan said, demurring, "But the dogs."

"We'll have to take that chance," said Kane. "Once we get him over the fence it'll be okay. If one of the patrols picks us up we can say that Joe fainted on us—after we passed through the gate. Of course, if he checks our story with that red-coat monkey at the gate that'll be somethin' else. Anyway, we'll have to take that chance."

Surfboat Joe was short of stature but wide of girth. It took some straining and grunting to hoist him on top of the high fence. Lowering him on the other side was an easy matter. The docks were deserted. So far so good. We picked up our human freight and plodded through the yard staying well in the shadows thrown by the buildings, avoiding the illumination wherever possible of the overhanging arc-lights. We paused for a rest when Joe's limp weight began to tell on us and were greeted by a wild chorus of yelps and snarls.

"It's the dogs!" Donovan shouted. "Let's go!"

We retrieved Joe from the ground and started at a shambling jog-trot in the direction of the ship. We had about a hundred yards more to do when a loud voice commanded us to halt. We slipped behind a pile of lumber and peered out. A Mountie and a dog hove into view, the animal casting around as if on scent.

"Might as well throw in the sponge," said Donovan. "We can tell him Joe slipped and——"

It was no expedient for the impetuous Nelander.

"Look," he said. "I'll sprint down to the ship from here. They'll see me and take after me, and maybe miss the rest of you altogether. I think I can make the gangway before they'll catch up with me."

"You'll have to travel like a bat out of hell," Kane told him, estimating the distance. "If that damn' dog catches up with you he's liable to take a good bite out of your stern."

"Just watch my smoke!" said Nelander, and was gone in a flash.

So were the Mountie and the police-dog, the latter a great, bounding brute who covered distance like light with his ears flattened down on his head. We watched the race with interest. Nelander's long legs ate up the dock. Once aboard the cutter he was safe. The *Mohican* was beyond the jurisdiction of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The Dane made it. The police-dog skidded to a halt on his rump at the foot of the cutter's gangplank and woofed in loud disappointment. The Mountie stood mopping his brow.

"All we have to do," Donovan whispered, "is to wait for that flat-foot to get off the dock and then we can sneak on board."

But the policeman showed little disposition to do that. He lingered. Astern of the *Mohican* was a British cruiser which Nelander had passed in his flight, encouraged by the gleeful shouts of some British sailors on the foc'sle head of their ship. Pertinent remarks seemed to be passing between the Mountie and the Britishers. From somewhere there sailed a large, over-ripe grapefruit to explode on the policeman's head, knocking off his helmet.

"That's Nelander's work, sure as I'm Irish!" exclaimed Donovan, dismayed. "Look out for trouble, my lads. That copper's going to bring a sergeant down to look into this. They'll both go aboard the *Mobican* and report it to the Old Man. Let's get Joe aboard while the getting is good."

We sneaked along, slipped past the Mountie engrossed in the interchange of insult with the British sailors, and sped up the cutter's gangplank. The inarticulate George-the-Finn was on anchor-watch.

"Him drunk swine," he observed, noting our burden, and grinned, "But him good swine, too."

The quartermaster had gone below a few moments before while George-the-Finn relieved him. It was a fortunate circumstance as subsequent developments proved.

Back aft we found Nelander sitting on a half-empty crate of grapefruit, after we had stowed Joe securely away in his bunk. The case was marked "Rotten and Unfit for Use." It was to be sent ashore with the rest of the ship's rubbish on the morrow.

"I just couldn't help heavin' one at that copper," he said. "He was the guy who smashed that pint of rum Olaf swiped for me when I offered it to him to let me through the gate that night. Now I'm even with him."

"I don't know," mused Donovan dubiously. "You'll probably get us all in a fine jam, Beach. That Mountie will be back here with bells on to complain to the captain. We're likely to wind up in the brig yet."

The Irishman's prophecy was borne out by the visit of a delegation of three members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police the next day. They were an inspector, a sergeant, and the outraged victim of the rotten grapefruit, who was a constable.

Captain Clark, meeting the visitors at the gangway and hearing their complaint, expressed deep mortification at the cause.

"Are you sure it was one of my men?" he insisted, unwilling to think the worst, but convinced of it.

The indignant constable was positive. "He came aboard this ship, captain. I'm certain of that. He was a tall man and husky, but it was dark and I did not see his face very clearly."

"We have several tall and husky men aboard," returned the *Mohican's* commanding officer. "If I muster the crew do you think you could pick out the man who hit you with the—er—grapefruit?"

The constable thought he could.

"All hands muster on the quarterdeck!" piped the bo'sun's mate.

The crew formed in a double rank wondering what signal circumstance provoked the impromptu muster at this unaccustomed hour, for only we few guilty ones knew the reason. Several others who had climbed the fence of the dockyard after the gates had been closed on other evenings, however, shifted uneasily at the sight of the Mounties' brilliant uniforms.

Up and down our assembled ranks paced the glowering constable. He peered intently into the face of every tall man and ironically enough hardly gave Nelander a perfunctory glance. This was no doubt because the Dane was flanked by the taller Kane and the vaster Pelican Pete. The real culprit stared before him from innocent blue eyes.

"I believe this is the man, Captain," the constable stated, pointing an accusatory finger at the open-mouthed Pelican Pete. "In fact, I'm sure of it," said the Mountie, peering closer at his victim.

Captain Clark smiled and answered suavely, "Now I'm certain you are in error, constable. This man has been restricted to the ship for quite some time awaiting disciplinary action by a court. Therefore he could not have been ashore."

Pete looked relieved and the constable disappointed. He shot a furtive glance at the frowning Inspector.

"You see," purred Captain Clark, "it must be a case of mistaken identity. Besides," he said blandly, "I am sure none of my men would stoop to such an abysmal piece of buffoonery."

The cutter's commanding officer had enough to contend with. Embroilment in a Royal Canadian Mounted Police inquiry offered little attraction.

"Obviously you have made a mistake, constable," said the Inspector shortly. "I'd suggest you be more positive in your future identifications."

The sergeant chimed in with a consideration.

"There's another ship back there." He pointed to the British cruiser astern. "They have some queer fellows aboard who've given us no end of trouble. Perhaps your man was from that ship."

"No," persisted the constable, throwing one more harassed look up and down our waiting ranks. "I'm positive he came aboard the *Mohican*. Besides, grapefruit is not generally eaten aboard British cruisers, it being essentially an American fruit——"

"Since when have you become an authority on international diet?" demanded the Inspector impatiently. "For your information, constable, that cruiser is just back from the West Indies station, where, I understand, grapefruit is grown to some extent. Wouldn't the fact possibly suggest even to your vast intelligence that her officers and men may have cultivated a taste for grapefruit?"

"Speaking of grapefruit, sir," said the sergeant helpfully, "I saw a case go aboard that cruiser yesterday. I believe it was labelled for the wardroom Mess."

"I'm sorry, sir," the constable stammered.

"I'm sorry too, Captain," the Inspector addressed himself to the cutter's commanding officer. "Sorry for the inconvenience we have caused you. Please accept my apologies."

"Mistakes will happen," murmured our captain graciously.

"And now," said the Inspector grimly, "we'll go aboard that cruiser and look into the matter of this grapefruit business further. And if you make any further identifications, constable," he warned the reddening Mountie, "you'd better be certain you're right!"

We breathed more easily as we watched the three members of the Mounted cross the cutter's gangway back to the dock.

"Those guys are overrated," smirked the real culprit to Kane from the side of his mouth. "Just goes to prove that they don't always get their man!"

Finis l'affaire grapefruit—for a while.

Although popular belief has a contrary view, servicemen of the different nations are not continually brawling or exhibiting

definitely antagonistic idiosyncrasies towards each other when meeting in strange lands. As a general rule they get along quite well. Our relations, for instance, with the Canadian soldiers and sailors and the British sailors and marines were always of the best during our in-port periods in Halifax. Of course, human nature being what it is, there were a few exceptions. But in the main peace and goodwill were the prevailing sentiments.

It was no uncommon sight on Sundays and other holidays to see British and Canadian sailors and soldiers messing with us as our guests aboard the *Mohican*. Coastguardmen too were always welcome in British and Canadian Messes ashore and afloat.

Prohibition, at the time, still being in a state of noble experiment in the United States, the cutter was consequently a dry ship. Hence all our drinking had to be done ashore.

Very partial indeed were we to the beer canteen of the Royal Canadian Regiment up in the moat-ringed Citadel, where for a modest sum we could slake our parched throats with foaming glasses of good Canadian beer.

A second hospitable drinking den in Halifax, or, rather, I should say, some feet beneath it, to which we were frequently invited were the two Canadian submarines moored in the dock-yard. An indication of Canadian ingenuity in the concoction of beverages was the unusual improvisation upon a familiar theme which originated with the crews of these craft.

Alcohol provides the fuel for the primary generative power which propels torpedoes through the water after they are expelled from the torpedo tube. This alcohol is of the very highest grade. Mixed with pineapple or other fruits it made a most delectable drink of which we grew to be inordinately fond. Our contribution to this unpatented creation of his Britannic Majesty's skilful subjects was the tinned fruit purloined for us from the *Mohican's* store-room by the adept Olaf.

We gathered aboard one of the submarines in the evening—Nelander, Kane, Donovan, and myself. Our hosts treated us to a lavish dinner of roast beef and Yorkshire pudding reinforced by liberal helpings of plum duff for dessert. Among the submarine's crew were several Britishers on loan from the British to the

Canadian Navy. Many of them had served on submarines during the late war. These entertained us with vivid yarns of their exciting war-time experiences over frequently replenished glasses of "Submarine Punch" as the torpedo alcohol and tinned-fruit combination was called. By midnight we were a song-roaring group of inseparable brothers. The officers of the submarine were ashore, so our festivity was untrammelled by official curb. An old gramophone blared out one song; we bellowed another simultaneously and banged out the rhythm with beer mugs and glasses in hideous concatenation. We probably made enough noise to frighten every fish within a radius of five miles.

"Too much row down there!" shouted a loud, stern voice down the conning-tower hatch. "Pipe down!"

Nelander suddenly stopped midway in the fifteenth verse of a melodious narrative describing the tribulations of a lady whose outstanding characteristic was her complete lack of virtue to announce that he recalled the owner of the reprimanding voice.

"Sounds like old Constable Grapefruit. What's he stickin' his ugly nose down in here for? I've a good mind to crown him with a slice of this plum duff."

Intention and execution were almost simultaneous gestures with Nelander. He had reached for a thick slice of the duff, but was restrained by Donovan's cooler reasoning.

"No use getting these lads in bad," he said, indicating our hosts.

The latter seemed very interested in the cause of the beach-comber's perturbation. A brief résumé of our earlier encounter was given to a heart-warming and sympathetic reaction upon the part of our friends.

"Let me handle this bloke," said a leading torpedoman. "I know him, come to think of it. He's had plenty of our crowd pinched since he's been on duty here." He lifted his voice to an ingratiating bellow. "Come down, constable, and have a snack with us. There's plenty of sandwiches left, plum duff, and cocoa, too." We were treated to a large and expansive wink, as he turned to whisper something to an A.B. standing near him.

Up above Constable Grapefruit appeared to be wrestling with

temptation. He did not accept immediately. Obviously there was something on his mind.

"Thanks, but the sergeant's likely to make his rounds any minute now. Wouldn't do for him to catch me off post, you know."

So the Mounties, at least this member of them, were corruptible!

"Just one cup of cocoa," the torpedoman coaxed winningly. "A sandwich too. I'll send a man up to keep a look-out for the sergeant."

"W-e-l-l . . ." Capitulation was effected. "If you'll send somebody up to keep an eye out for the sergeant . . ."

The torpedoman detailed the A.B. to climb into the conning-tower. Constable Grapefruit came into view, blinking in the light, and a trifle conscience-stricken for having sold his integrity for a mess of pottage.

"Nice of you chaps to invite me down for this," he mumbled between sips and bites. "Getting chilly to-night up there."

"We know what it is to stand watches," said the torpedoman sympathetically. "Have another sandwich? More plum duff?"

The constable warmed towards us. "Thanks. You know, I hated to tell you to pipe down, but you were making a little too much row. If the sergeant heard you when he made his rounds—why, he'd raise hell with me for not reporting the matter."

"We all have our duty to do," said Donovan, "no matter how unpleasant."

The look-out shouted down a warning.

"Sergeant's comin'!"

The constable gulped down his cocoa, crammed the last of his sandwich into his mouth.

"He's comin' right down the dock," the A.B. said, rejoining us from above.

"Sorry got to run off like this," Constable Grapefruit apologized thickly. "But you know how it is. . . ."

"Drop in any time for a cup of cocoa," the torpedoman invited him heartily. The constable disappeared through the conning-tower. With a wink the torpedoman added, "Now for the fun!"

Something ground and scraped against the side of the submarine to be followed by a loud appeal.

"Help! Help!"

"Sounds like Grapefruit," said Donovan, starting to his feet. "What happened to him?"

"Don't worry," said the torpedoman calmly. "All those red-jackets can swim. It's part of their training, I'm told."

"Help! Throw me a line!" yelled the voice.

"Those blokes are always braggin' about what they can do," continued the torpedoman unperturbedly. "Crackshots, cracker-jack horsemen, crack swimmers. Personally I think they're a bit crack-brained as well. Think they're so goddam' superior."

"Help!" came the gurgling cry.

Even Kane cast an anxious look in the direction of the conning-tower. "He sounds like he's in a bad way."

"Let him cool off a couple more minutes," the torpedoman grinned. "He probably needs a bath. Anyway, there's nothin' to worry about. All he's gotta do is hang on to a piling of the dock 'til we throw him a line."

"Down below there!" hailed a stentorian newcomer. "Come up here and give me a hand to get one of my men out of the water!"

"Comin', sergeant, comin'!" returned the torpedoman, with a chuckle.

We followed him up through the conning-tower to look down upon our erstwhile guest clutching one of the dock pilings. Overboard also was the submarine's gangplank. The torpedoman heaved a line to the constable and we hauled him up.

"How did this happen?" demanded the angry sergeant of his dripping subordinate.

"The gangway carried away," replied the latter from between chattering teeth.

"What were you doing off your post, anyway?" the sergeant wanted to know sternly. "Have you been below drinking some of that rotgut alcohol?"

"Honest, sergeant, he was only havin' a warm cup of cocoa with us," said the torpedoman.

"Spiked with some of your torpedo alcohol, eh?" said the sergeant. "Well, he can sleep it off in the guardhouse!"

The two members of the Mounted walked away, the shivering constable feebly expostulating, the sergeant maintaining a grim, ominous silence.

The submarine men broke out a new gangplank to replace the old one responsible for the constable's mishap.

"Good job, Dick!" the torpedoman commended the A.B. "You just cut those ropes right, but you didn't have to spread so much grease around. Take a hell of a lot of cleanin'!"

A few days before his scheduled discharge from the hospital Preacher Mason suffered another accident, one which promised to keep him confined to that institution for the remainder of the Ice Patrol season. He slipped on a newly-waxed linoleum floor while returning from leave one night and broke his ankle.

As soon as we heard the news we hurried to the hospital to see him.

"Tough luck, Preacher, old boy!" sympathized Kane.

Mason seemed resigned to his new affliction. "The ways of the Lord are unfathomable."

"You're lucky at that," said Nelander. "*We're* shovin' off tomorrow for another twenty-one days of fog, sea, an' that old Jonah Professor Bubble-eyes. Here you are bunked up in a nice room, no watches to stand, an' a beautiful doll to call on you an' bring flowers. God looks after His own, I'll say!"

Mason's eyes lit at the reference to Eskimo Marie.

"She—she has been most kind to me," he murmured. "I hope some day to be able to repay her for what she has done." He sighed, and added, "She deserves a better fate than working in a place like Sticks'."

"Don't worry about Marie," Kane advised. "She's no lily, an' she's been around. An' it ain't no use you tryin' to soak her in the Gospel. She likes her men rough an' ready—like me."

Mason said mildly, "You're frank and honest with me, Kane—but are you frank and honest with Marie? I would like to know very much."

"What the hell business is it of yours?" Kane laughed, momentarily taken aback.

The bedridden Mason shrugged his shoulders. "I just wanted to know. Marie talks so much about you. She thinks the sun rises and sets on that red head of yours. Seriously, Kane," he said earnestly, "I hope you mean right by her."

"Listen," said Kane. "Stop worryin'. Dames are all alike. Lead 'em, love 'em, leave 'em—an' the sooner you catch on to treatin' 'em that way the better they'll like you an' the more fun you'll have!"

It was an irresponsible philosophy to which Mason could not subscribe.

We bade him good-bye and left the hospital, boarding a tram for the ride down to Barrington Street and Sticks' Place. We pooled our resources and found we had five dollars, just enough for a few rounds of drinks. But Sticks could always be depended on to extend a little 'tick' against our next pay-day.

It was our last night in port, and the twenty-one days ahead of us caused our spirits to droop. We drank with dogged perseverance.

While engaged in that conscientious occupation the door of Sticks' Place admitted three girls, strangers to us.

"Too bad our old Lothario, Joe, isn't here," said Donovan, winking over to them.

"Call 'em over for a drink," said Kane, boldly appraising them.

"We're short of money," I reminded him. "You know how these things turn out. If we invite them over for a drink we'll all get half lit. Next thing you'll be figuring on getting a room for the night—and where are the finances to come from?"

"Won't do any harm to ask 'em to have a snorter with us," insisted Nelander. "It'll be a little company, anyhow—some-thing to think about durin' the next three weeks outside."

I was delegated to tender the invitation, which I did, meeting with immediate compliance.

The girls came over to our table. They told us they were from across the harbour—Dartmouth, a suburb of Halifax—and were

out for an evening's recreation. They were attendants from the Nova Scotian Hospital for the Insane, and this was a much anticipated evening off.

"What are you boys going to do later?" one asked.

"We're broke," said Donovan. "After a few drinks we're going back to the ship clean and sober like all good sailors should."

The girl looked disappointed. "Too bad," she murmured. "We were planning on going to the Dutch House. Maybe we'll see you boys, then, when you get back to port."

The Dutch House was a road-house some ten miles out of Halifax and was run by a genial old Hollander. He was known to his patrons as Dutch—his real name, Hans something-or-other that was practically unpronounceable. We had been out to his place before when we had been in funds. One could always be certain of a well-cooked Dutch meal there washed down by bootleg beer of Hans' own brewing, washed down by rum and other spirits.

But to-night in our enfeebled economic condition the trip was out of the question. Hans was not Sticks. He did not extend credit.

We were brooding over this instance of man's inhumanity to man when a figure unfamiliar to Sticks' entered. He was Dr Wilcoxon, the *Mohican's* medical man. He gazed round a moment, then, catching sight of us, crossed to our table. Sticks' Place was patronized almost exclusively by enlisted men. One rarely saw an officer there.

"I'm glad I've caught you fellows before you've gotten too stiff," he greeted. "How would you like to earn a few dollars?"

The Dutch House . . . girls . . . good food and drink . . .!

We chorused loud assurance that it was a desire close to our hearts.

"Good!" said the doctor, and proceeded to explain how he happened to be so fortuitously metamorphosed into manna from heaven at this particular time. "A doctor, a friend of mine, in one of the private hospitals here in Halifax is looking for a good, healthy blood-donor to give a transfusion to one of his patients. It's for a wealthy man, and he'll pay well. I thought of you chaps.

Some one told me I'd probably find you here, so I came right over. I have a taxi outside if you're agreeable."

"How much is there in it, Doc?" asked Nelander. "You see, the three of us are figurin' on throwin' a little party later on—if we can raise enough dough."

"I think there'll be about fifty dollars or so in it," Wilcoxon informed us. "Would that be sufficient to cover—er"—he flicked a glance at the girls—"expenses?"

Nelander got to his feet. "Let's go!" he said, with brief eloquence.

We made the girls promise they would await us in Sticks' and then left with the doctor. The private hospital was out near the Halifax Commons. It did not take us long to get there. A nurse in immaculate white met us at the door and ushered us in. We were asked to seat ourselves in the luxuriously furnished entrance hall. The institution looked more like an expensively appointed home. After a few minutes' wait we were approached by another nurse, who beckoned us to follow her.

Dr Wilcoxon's colleague put a blunt question to us when we stood before him.

"Ever had syphilis, any of you?"

No.

"Haven't given up hope yet," grinned Nelander, and then shrunk before the doctor's disapproving frown.

"I'll have your bloods typed," he told us. "If the blood of one of you men matches that of my patient I will need about 500 c.c.'s—about a pint."

We looked at each other in some wonder. In our blissful ignorance we had thought that all required would be a little blood from each of us. That bloods were typed and matched with the blood of the patient was news to us.

We held a brief consultation before we entered the laboratory where our blood was to be tested.

"We didn't expect this," said Nelander. "So I suggest that the one who's chosen for the transfusion share the dough with the rest of us."

"Fair enough," Kane agreed. Donovan and I nodded assent.

We all shook hands on the deal and entered the laboratory. A technician jabbed needles into our fingers from which puncture the blood was drawn. This preliminary concluded, we returned to the entrance hall to await the results. We were sent for in a few minutes.

"Which of you is Nelander?" the doctor asked, consulting a small typewritten slip in his hand.

"Me!" acknowledged the beachcomber cheerfully.

"Your blood is type two and matches that of my patient," the doctor announced. "I will take you for the transfusion. Let me look at your veins."

Nelander removed his jumper and exhibited his bare and muscled arm.

The doctor appeared satisfied. "Very good. Outstanding and prominent veins." He glanced at his wrist-watch and said, "But I won't need you for another two hours yet. Would you care to wait here in the hospital? You can lie down in one of the rooms and rest if you like."

"No, I'll go for a little walk with my pals," decided the Dane, "if that's all right with you. I'll be back in two hours."

The doctor nodded. "Drink no alcohol," he warned. "But take as much water as you can."

Back to Sticks' Place we went and found the girls from the Insane Asylum dutifully awaiting us.

They were interested in finding out who had given the blood.

"Nobody yet," said Nelander, "but it looks like I'm the goat. Gotta go back in a couple of hours. Let's have a drink."

"The doctor said you should not drink," said Donovan.

Nelander was unimpressed. His spirits seemed to have drooped a little. "I'm going to get a good skinful before he drains a pint of my blood away."

A half-hour swam by . . . an hour! Nelander was foundering in heavy seas. We looked at him anxiously. As the sole hope of our enjoying the proposed party at the Dutch House his welfare was a prime consideration with us. If he became too drunk the doctor might reject him as a blood-donor. One of the girls whispered to me that no transfusion would be taken from a

drunken donor because alcohol had a coagulating effect on blood. Whether she was right or not, the mere thought of the fifty dollars being lost to us was sufficiently alarming.

"You're due at the hospital in an hour," I reminded Nelander. "Better slow up."

He appeared to have repented of his ready acquiescence to the sale of his blood, for he mumbled ill-humoured reluctance at becoming a "goddam' guinea-pig."

"You've got to go through with it!" Kane insisted, sharing our apprehension of a fading party.

"It's all right for you guys to sound off like that," Nelander grumbled, a slight slur becoming manifest in his speech. "You'll be able to enjoy yourselves, but I'll be all in when that damn' sawbones takes a pint out of me. Won't even have enough left in me to give m' girl a good time."

With but half an hour to go before he was due back at the hospital the Dane's head began to droop, much to our consternation.

"Let's take him into the morgue and give him a good sluicin'," Kane suggested, eyeing Nelander angrily. "It may work."

So to the room where Sticks threw the drunks when they passed out we carried the beachcomber. There we stripped him of his clothing, dropped him into a bath, and sloshed him with icy water followed by a vigorous massage. In less than fifteen minutes he revived.

"What's comin' off here?" he demanded blearily. "Hey, don't knock me around like that!"

"Never mind what's comin' off!" said Kane grimly, as he pummelled Nelander back into consciousness. "Are you goin' to give that transfusion or ain't you?"

"What transfusion?"

"You know what transfusion. So we can go to the Dutch House."

"Yeah—yeah!" panted the tormented Nelander. "Take—it—easy—for Pete's sake!"

He dressed under our watchful eyes. When we led him out into the street the cold air helped to complete what we had

begun in Sticks' morgue. But he reeked of alcohol. This necessitated a halt at the first chemist's shop we came to where an odorous gargling solution was purchased and poured liberally into the sacrificial lamb's unwilling mouth.

We were a few minutes late in arriving at the hospital, but nothing was said.

"You didn't drink any alcohol?" the doctor questioned.

"No," said Kane, answering for Nelander. "He didn't."

"Take plenty of water?"

"He'd have drunk the Halifax reservoir dry if we hadn't stopped him," said Kane. "Listen to him slosh as he walks!"

We paraded up to the hospital's operating-room with Nelander in case with rapidly returning intelligence he should make a quick bolt. Once closeted therein we watched with interest as the doctor took a sphygmomanometer reading from the Dane's arm. Having satisfied himself that Nelander's blood-pressure was all that was to be desired, he ordered him to strip and handed him a pair of hospital pyjamas to wear.

"Good luck, Beach!" we called to our shipmate as we left him. For one breath-taking moment, full of suspense, Nelander looked as if he might be on the verge of flight. He glanced about him irresolutely. Our beseeching looks swooped down on him. He subsided.

Some thirty minutes later he rejoined us. He looked somewhat pale, drawn, and drained.

"I feel weak as a cat," he complained. "Don't believe I'll be able to make that party after all they took out of me. But you guys run along," he urged us generously, "an' have a good time. I'd better go back to the ship an' turn in."

He handed us twelve dollars and fifty cents apiece and bade us an enfeebled good-night.

We hurried back to Sticks' Place, picked up an acquaintance from the Royal Canadian Regiment to substitute for the absent martyr, and headed for the Dutch House.

Kane had once earned a medal for conspicuous heroism in rescuing Nelander from drowning.

I could not help thinking that Nelander deserved one, too.

Twelve

TWO DAYS AFTER TAKING OVER THE DEATH-WATCH from the *Cherokee* on the International Ice Patrol we sighted a stranded iceberg.

In their journey south these majestic pillars of frigid menace sometimes run aground in the shoal water washing over the Grand Banks. Temporarily anchored, they remain so for only a few days at most until inevitable disintegration reduces their bulk and sends them upon a resumption of their stately drift.

The one we sighted from the *Mobican* jutted a hundred and sixty feet from the sea. Earth-veins which it had picked up during its formative years, while it was still part of a Greenland glacier, streaked its glittering sides, which showed vast cleavages from the recent calvings of small growlers. The stranded berg's lower portions had come in contact with the tail of the Grand Banks sixteen fathoms below the surface of the sea. Reefs projected outward from its quiescent bulk in two directions, one of them extending several hundred feet just about a fathom below the water. Very deceptive indeed are these submerged reefs of ice and as dangerous to ships as are the sharp-fanged coral hazards of more southerly climes. Common report maintains that the sinking of the ill-fated *Titanic* was the result of its contact with one of these underwater spurs of a berg rather than its collision with the perceptible and more bulky main part above the surface.

The submerged fangs of the berg bred a healthy respect for its supine viciousness in the breast of our captain. He was not one to take any careless chances with it. The *Mobican* circled about from a safe distance while officers and the official ice observer took observations of the towering colossus, sextant angles determining its unusual height.

The weather was warm enough on this clear June day for us to shed our jumpers. We attended our duties in undershirts and regarded with wonder the stranded mountain winking sinister

promise of its power. Since no other bergs were reported as adrift, at the request of the official ice observer, who is the unofficial admiral of the Ice Patrol, Captain Clark decided to keep the giant berg before us under observation until the workings of Nature should free it from the shoal of the Tail of the Grand Banks.

Now that summer had come with its provocations to the souls of men, we held impromptu concerts on deck of nights to vary the monotony of long days at sea. The ship's bugler had been responsible for ferreting out our musical talent. He was a self-appointed master of ceremonies and proved as indefatigable in that rôle as in his other one, that of ship's gossip. Captain Clark placed the stamp of official approval on our 'smokers' by attending several of them in person and democratically participating in the rollicking chorus of the sea chanties we sang.

Our musical *ensemble* consisted of "Iceberg Jake and the *Mohican's* Mad Musicians"—a melodic unit comprising two South Sea organs, three harmonicas, a mandolin, and a guitar. Donovan could usually be prevailed upon to raise his clear tenor voice in an Irish ballad, Kane's thunderous baritone vibrated in a long list of sea chanties he knew by heart, he singing the verses while we did harmonic injustice to the choruses. Ramon Sanchez, a member of the cutter's black-gang, involuntary expatriate from his native Venezuela for certain political indiscretions and one-time student for the opera, added classic tone to our maritime musical evenings.

Whispering guitar and tinkling mandolin, the deeper resonances of the South Sea organs and the tenor interpolations of the harmonicas, joined with clear, manly voices to offer a pæan of melody against the stark backdrop of Nature's master stage-craftsmanship and made an impression one could not easily forget.

Nelander entertained us with sleight-of-hand manipulations he had picked up in his circus days, in addition to exhibiting his skill with animals by putting the talented Olaf through a series of tricks. My humble contributions to these nights of wholesome mirth and melody were vigorous but amateurish renderings

of such dramatic poem narratives as *The Man from Snowy River*, *While the Billy Boils*, and other poems of my native Australia.

When in the vicinity of any ships of the French fishing fleet we would sometimes heave to of an evening and invite the crew or crews of that lonely vessel or vessels to come aboard and enjoy one of our 'smokers.' Our guests would repay our invitation by offering contributions of their own to the programme.

A full moon, cold as the stranded iceberg which fancy suggested to me had stopped its ponderous progress southward to listen awhile to us, touched the pale bosom of the sea with pallid lips as she sat enthroned in crystal splendour on the berg's icy pinnacle.

In bold silhouette against the wanly glowing sky the berg reared like some silent cathedral lent for a short while by one of the more generous gods of the colder lands. And, to me, our songs and music seemed the hallowed rituals of high priests chanting tribute to the mystic magic of that transient monument of frigid power which had come sailing from the empty wastes of the North in such cold, formidable beauty.

Up . . . up . . . high . . . high . . . and over the pale expanse of quiet sea sang Kane:

"Oh, the work was hard, and the wages low;
Leave her, Johnny, leave her.
You drink whisky while I drink rum,
It's time for us to leave her."

And we, the lesser dignitaries in this pale-canopied house of thunder:

"You drink whisky while we drink rum,
Whisky for my Johnny . . ."

Then the white god of the frozen wastes repented of his benevolence. His voice, a crashing, rumbling roar to windward, brought the smoker to an abrupt end.

The berg had freed itself from the tentacles of the Tail of the Grand Banks. It had lost equilibrium by doing so, and the process calved off hundreds of tons of ice, which plunged into the sea with huge splashes sent geyser-like high into the night.

Over and over turned the huge white monster, the moon-glittering water washing over its death-agonies in a gleaming cascade. One final convulsive surge and it attained its new equilibrium and began its slow journey southward again surrounded by a battalion of vari-sized growlers which had sprung like new life from the agonized turmoil of a monster mother's delivery.

What we had seen was an unusual sight even for the International Ice Patrol—a major calving, as the process is known. I was not to see such another for the two succeeding years I spent on the Ice Patrol cutters. . . .

Olaf was in trouble!

He had a bizarre habit of stringing long trains of toilet tissue over the *Mohican* which he stole from the ship's lavatories. From the rigging, from the mast, from the wireless antennæ, from the quarterdeck, the unwound tissue floated like streamers at some nautical *Mardi Gras*, waving, fluttering, writhing, in the breeze.

The ship's moneylender, Captain Milton, who since his blighted romance of some weeks before had been going around with a chin supported by his instep, took on a sourer outlook towards life as a result of Olaf's behaviour. Every time he caught sight of the latter in the neighbourhood of the lavatories he caught up the nearest broom and gave chase. This annoyed Nelander, who promised Milton double retaliation for every ounce of chastisement imposed on his beloved Olaf.

"I wish," snarled the moneylender, "that you'd learn that damn' monk to keep away from the head, among the other tricks you've taught him. I've stood for a lot of things aboard this ship, but I ain't gonna stand for that red-arsed flea-carriage of yours makin' a mess of things. It's got to stop, I'm tellin' you."

"You lay a finger on him," Nelander threatened, "an' I'll turn you inside out."

Milton was unwilling to run the hazards of physical combat with the stalwart Dane and so had recourse to the captain.

A special 'mast,' or disciplinary hearing, was held for Olaf,

the accused, the chief and only witness appearing against him being the outraged captain-of-the-head.

Natty in his special-cut, tailor-made blues, his jaunty white hat cocked at a rakish angle, Olaf was brought before the captain by the depressed Nelander.

Our commanding officer looked at Olaf sternly, then read out the grave accusation against him:

"You are charged, Olaf, with destroying Government property in that you have, on various occasions, strewn toilet tissue paper about the ship, rendering thereby said paper unfit for use, and contributing to a depreciation of the discipline expected on board a United States Coast Guard cutter. What have you to say for yourself?"

Olaf had a lot to say, all of it unintelligible. He danced up and down and slapped the deck with the backs of his hands. He stuck out his tongue at the captain with offensive frequency while trying simultaneously to stand on his head. He spat and slobbered, and altogether was most eloquent in his own defence. But for all of Olaf's vivid efforts Nelander deemed it advisable to add a few mitigating remarks.

"Olaf don't mean anythin' by it, Captain. He was only foolin'."

Captain Clark removed his pseudo-disapproving gaze from Olaf to let it fall in all true legitimacy on the self-appointed advocate.

"Rumours have reached my ears about certain of Olaf's peculiar habits in conjunction with sundry missing articles of canned fruit, pies, and cakes, which have strangely disappeared from the commissary store-room. Do you happen, by any chance, to know anything about this singular situation, Nelander? Then," said the *Mohican's* commanding officer, much to Nelander's perturbation, "there was the matter of Thomas's missing saxophone." He eyed the uncomfortable Dane quizzically.

"Don't believe a word of it, Captain," said the latter in earnest unease. "Olaf don't know the meanin' of the word steal. It's just a grudge the captain-of-the-head's got against him. Why, he's chased poor Olaf with a broom whenever he's caught sight

of him—for no reason at all!" Nelander finished in virtuous indignation.

"That is indeed a strange prejudice on Milton's part," remarked Captain Clark, "and not altogether deserved, perhaps. I have a feeling the blame should lie elsewhere."

"Yes, sir!" agreed Nelander heartily, thinking he saw open water ahead.

"Therefore, any more scrapes Olaf gets into I shall hold you strictly responsible for!"

"Yes, sir," said Nelander, less heartily.

The following dawn indicated how much the captain's warning had impressed Olaf. Once more the *Mohican* flew her unnautical pennants. They started at the truck of the mainmast, trailed down to the crow's nest and signal yard, looped the backstays and ratlings of the rigging. Olaf had outdone himself, it seemed. The ship looked as if she were going to a party. The event became the standing joke of the Patrol. Captain Clark did not find it funny, though.

"You will go aloft, Nelander," he ordered, "and remove all that paper from the rigging."

"Yes, sir," said the Dane unhappily.

"And about that troublesome pet of yours—I'm going to get rid of him at the earliest opportunity."

"Not goin' to throw him overboard, are you, Captain?" asked the apprehensive Coastguardman. "If you'll only give him another chance!" he implored.

"No, I'm not going to throw him overboard," said Captain Clark, stilling Nelander's worst fears. "I'm going to give him to the first French fishermen we meet."

In no way stimulated by this bit of information Nelander sadly climbed aloft and spent the next hour denuding the cutter of the marks of Olaf's high spirits.

Three days later we encountered the *Saint-Jean*, a three-masted barquentine, one of the French fishing fleet. The parting between the Dane and Olaf at the *Mohican's* rail just before the latter was to be rowed to his new home was touching. Nelander seemed genuinely affected. As the distance widened between the

Mobican and the *Saint-Jean's* dory a sorrowful, drooping figure hung over the cutter's rail, staring outward until the barquentine had picked up her boat and became herself lost in the growing night. By way of showing their appreciation for the new member of their crew, gift of the captain of the United States Coast Guard cutter *Mobican*, the skipper of the French boat presented the cutter with enough cod and haddock to half-fill the surfboat.

Adios, Olaf . . . with all of Nature's untutored virtues of fidelity and affection, and a good bit of man's tutored vices . . . *adios!* We were going to miss him, particularly his usefulness on foraging expeditions in the cutter's store-room. . . .

Fire in Number One and Two Holds. Blaze getting beyond control. Request vessels in vicinity stand by.

MASTER, *Durania*

It was a radio flash picked up by the *Mobican* from the combination freight and passenger ship *Durania*, bound from Glasgow to Boston, and now a hundred miles due east of Sable Island.

Proceeding to your assistance. Keep me informed regarding your plight.

B. L. CLARK,

Commanding U.S.C.G.C. *Mobican*.

That reassuring message was immediately transmitted. From the cutter's gossip hound, Bolton, the ship's bugler, we learned that plans were being made to take the passengers aboard our ship.

"I was just talking to the Old Man's messboy. The Old Man told him to clean out the extra cabin state-room."

The cutter's propeller was churning the Atlantic to a milky froth astern. Our hull pulsated and vibrated with the increased speed which was now driving us through the water at a good sixteen-knot clip. The sea was calm except for the inevitable ground swell rolling across the Banks of Newfoundland. Above the sun shone in a cloudless sky. We had an uninterrupted view of the horizon. We hoped it would remain clear until the business at hand was disposed of.

"Prepare for fire and rescue parties!" was piped throughout the ship by the boatswain's mates.

The *Mohican's* lifeboats were stocked with fire-axes, grappling hooks, and extra life-preservers, and crews were assigned them to carry out rescue operations should the *Durania's* plight warrant her abandonment. All preparations aboard the cutter were made with practised skill and quick efficiency. All eight of our lifeboats were to be put over the side when word from the bridge gave that anticipated order. One hour after receiving the *Durania's* appeal the *Mohican* was in readiness from stem to stern in all respects.

Our funnel belched clouds of black smoke, which rolled with thick fury in the still air. Twin streaks of foam leaped away from our cutting bow. Up in the crow's nest a double look-out stood tense and watchful.

Captain Clark sent for Kane to the bridge.

"You will take charge of No. 2 lifeboat when we meet with the *Durania*," he told him.

"I'm not a petty-officer, sir," protested Kane wonderingly.

"Never mind that," the captain dismissed the consideration impatiently. "I give orders aboard the *Mohican*. If I happen to have selected you above the heads of several petty-officers, then I must have my good reasons for doing so. We've a nasty job ahead of us, I believe. It has been my intention to promote you to coxswain when a vacancy occurs in that rating. I am certain you will justify my expectations of you," he concluded, with brief and expressive compliment. He waved Kane off. "That will be all. See that your boat is ready to be lowered and report to me after you have satisfied yourself on that score."

"Aye, aye, sir!"

In the cutter's throbbing belly the engine-room was maintaining a full head of steam, greedily consumed by the ever-hungry turbines, which in turn created electrical energy for the racing electro-motors thrusting us through the sea at our maximum speed.

Down in the sick-bay laboured Dr Wilcoxon and his aide, dour Iodine Mike, making preparations for the reception of

burned or otherwise injured passengers and crew from the *Durania*. The Master-at-arms was busy down in the sail locker breaking out hammocks for the occupants of the upper berth-deck to sleep in—that part of the ship was being reserved for the expected arrival of survivors from the distressed ship towards whom we were bearing.

Fire beyond control. Am preparing to abandon ship. Please expedite arrival.

Three hours before we arrived at the *Durania*'s position we received the message of her captain's intention to forsake his vessel. Our engine-room flogged every last ounce of speed from its threshing engines. The cutter buried her nose in the pliable sea, flinging up spray like a spirited horse. Far astern whirled the inky product of our belching funnels.

This trip of the *Durania* promised to be her last. Lloyd's had her registered as of 10,000 tons displacement, carrying passenger-accommodation for five hundred persons. She had been on the Glasgow-Boston run for twenty years.

Other ships had also picked up her frantic plea for assistance. A second Coast Guard ship was coming out from Boston, and a third was racing from New York. The *Mohican*, however, was closest.

One hour before we sighted the burning ship we received her last message.

SOS am abandoning ship. Fire has cut off my escape. SOS cannot hold out much longer. Please hurry SOS SO——

And no more. Was one more brave radio operator a victim of duty?

"Smoke ahead!" the look-outs shouted down the speaking-tube coiling down from the mast to the bridge and on to the crow's nest. The sight of a distant smudge hanging over the eastern horizon had precipitated that announcement.

"Where away?"

"Four points off the port bow!"

"Let me know when it's bearing dead ahead!"

"Aye, aye, sir!"

"Right rudder. Change course to a hundred and thirty," the captain crisply ordered the helmsman. "Let me know when you're steady on."

The *Mobican* straightened out on the new course.

"Steady on a hundred and thirty, sir!" the helmsman announced.

"Crow's nest!" the captain barked into the speaking-tube. "How is that smoke bearing now?"

"Dead ahead, sir!" came the reply.

Now that the burning *Durania* had been picked up by the crow's nest a thrill of excitement ran through the ship. Another hour at most and we should reach her position. Fifteen minutes after the look-outs had spotted smoke from aloft we could see it from the cutter's main-deck.

"She must be blazin' like hell," said Kane, staring at the nearing vessel. "Hope we don't reach her too late to do some good."

"They've had plenty of time to get the passengers off," said Donovan. "I bet all we'll have to do is bring the lifeboats from the *Durania* alongside the *Mobican* and haul the passengers aboard. It's a tailor-made rescue."

"I dunno," said Surfboat Joe, standing near by. "Nothin' is tailor-made at sea, least of all rescues. I've seen an' taken a part in many a rescue job in me thirty years, an' every one was a little different from the other. When you've got landlubbin', panicky passengers to handle you can expect trouble."

The smoke-wreathed hull of the burning ship hoisted itself above the horizon. Through the telescopes of the forward five-inch gun-sights we could perceive a number of white-painted lifeboats which had pulled away from the stricken vessel. As we drew closer we saw that her upper works were all ablaze with the fire eating viciously along the promenade- and boat-decks.

"Good God!" exclaimed Kane, after Captain Clark had manœuvred as close to the burning ship as safety permitted. "Look at those people on her poop! Why the hell didn't they get 'em off when they had a chance?"

Surfboat Joe gave the reason. "Look along the starboard side of her boat-deck."

We looked, and saw a string of burned and burning boats. The fire had beaten the passengers to the boats, probably the result of the reluctance of the *Durania's* skipper to give the word to abandon ship until all hope of extinguishing the blaze had passed.

"I bet her Old Man will have to answer for that when he gets up before an investigating committee," was Donovan's opinion.

"You can't explain away dead passengers," said Joe quietly, "when you're responsible for their safety."

Captain Clark summoned the boat coxswains for a last-minute conference.

"He told us not to mind those people in the lifeboats," Kane informed me upon his return. "Says they're in no immediate danger, and our motor-boat can pick them up easily enough. It's that mob on the *Durania's* after parts we'll have to try an' get before it's too late."

Within two hundred yards to windward of the helpless ship the *Mobican's* engines were rung down to the stop position. We stood awaiting orders tensely. They came.

"Stand by, fire and rescue parties!"

We took our seats swiftly on the thwarts of the surfboat to which we had been assigned. Nelander and I were in Kane's charge.

"Away, fire and rescue parties!" came the command from the bridge.

With a rattling and squeaking of sheave-blocks we were lowered to the surface of the sea by men on deck tending the falls.

"Let go the falls!" shouted Kane, assuming command. "Cast off the sea painter! Stand by your oars! Out oars! Give way together!"

We strained at the oars and drew away from the cutter's side.

"Pull, you devils!" Kane flogged us. "Pull your bloody heads off!"

We needed no stimulating. Nelander, who was pulling stroke, set a fast beat. We had difficulty maintaining it. When we swept

alongside a lifeboat from the burning *Durania* Kane gave it attention only as long as it took him to shout, "Pull over to the cutter. You're in no danger. You'll be picked up in a few minutes."

Surfboat Joe's boat nosed in our wake. We both laid a course for the stern of the blazing ship. We held our lead and reached her ahead of that commanded by the old chief gunner's mate.

"Way enough!" bellowed Kane. "Oars!"

Twenty smoke-blackened faces peered through the acrid haze down at us, faint hope wrestling with bleak despair. A woman among them with a bundle in her arms struck up an hysterical wail horrible to hear.

"Jump!" Kane roared hoarsely. "It's your only chance! We'll fish you out of the water!"

The heat radiating from the hull of the burning ship was intense, even though her after parts had not yet been touched by flame.

A few of the trapped passengers followed Kane's urge and dived into the sea. We promptly hauled them out, Surfboat Joe energetically assisting.

"Come on!" Kane shouted in entreaty to the others still aboard the ship. "Jump! See how easy it's done!"

"The baby will drown!" the hysterical woman shrieked.

"She's right!" cried Joe in affirmation, from the sternsheets of his near-by boat. "The kid 'ud drown for a cert."

Others on the *Durania* bewailed their inability to swim.

"For God's sake!" Kane roared. "We can't let 'em burn! I'm goin' up there. On deck!" he hailed stentorially. "Is there a sailor among you up there?"

There wasn't. The only member of the crew was a wild-eyed steward still in his grimy white jacket of office.

"Stand by to take a heaving line!" Kane ordered. He swung one upward. The weighted monkey-fist flew over the rail of the stern forty feet above us.

"I'm goin' to bend on another line!" shouted Kane. "Haul it up and make fast!"

The one-inch manilla line which we bent on to the heaving

line was hauled up by the frightened steward and made fast as directed.

"Secure a line around the baby an' lower it!" was Kane's subsequent command between hands cupped to his mouth to conquer the noise, crackle, and roar of the flames and the cries and shouts coming from those of the *Durania's* lifeboats pulling towards the near-by *Mobican*.

The steward tried to take the baby from the woman, but she repulsed him.

"She won't let me have it!" he yelled down to Kane. "She's out of her mind, I think!"

"I'll take care of her," returned Kane. "Slide down this line into our boat yourself an' the rest of you follow."

Down into our boat slid more of the *Durania's* survivors. Most of them suffered from burns in varying degrees.

Kane thrust his steering-oar into Nelander's grasp.

"Handle this until I get back!"

"Where the hell you goin'?" demanded the surprised Dane.

"To get that silly skirt," said Kane. "She'll fry like a' egg in a few minutes."

Hand over hand Kane hauled himself up the line hanging from the blazing ship's stern. Painful indeed must have been his progress as the line carried him against the hot counter of the vessel. Even her paint was blistering, sure indication of the intensity of the heat which gnawed the ship from within.

Smoke now billowed down in clouds and hid the intrepid Coastguardman from our view. A minute or two passed and then a bobbing, swaying little bundle was lowered to us through the swirling screen. We removed the heaving line which was secured around the object. It was the baby. The rope had cut its tender skin in places. We placed the infant carefully in the sternsheets of the surfboat. A few seconds later and the mother appeared. Surfboat Joe's monomoy came alongside, and we transferred the woman and child to be taken back to the *Mobican* at once where our doctor could attend them.

Five minutes—an eternity in that hell of flame and smoke—and no Kane! No sound beyond the menacing crackle and hoot

of encroaching flames, the groans of the burned survivors still in our surfboat. We began to get alarmed.

A body splashed into the sea close to us. It wasn't Kane, but that of a young boy, badly burned.

"Here he comes!" I shouted, catching sight of our huge coxswain looming through a break in the smoke above us. His uniform was smouldering. Over the side he came in a neat dive. We hauled him dripping into the boat. Gone were his eyebrows, and his luxuriant crop of red hair was badly singed.

"You get that kid I threw overboard?" were his first words.

"Yes."

"That damn' smoke almost got me," he panted. "I'll take that steering-oar now, Beach."

"Better let me handle it, Red," advised Nelander. "You're a sick-bay case with them burns."

"I'm in charge of this boat! Get back to your thwart!"

"Don't be a mug!" protested the Dane. "You're too——"

"Get back on your thwart," Kane ordered him between set lips, "before I knock you back!"

Nelander relinquished the oar and took his seat alongside George-the-Finn.

"Stand by your oars!" cried the scorched coxswain. "Give way together!"

From the *Mohican's* signal yardarm fluttered the general recall signal for all boats. We pulled back quickly and were soon hoisted aboard. The quarterdeck was crowded with rescued passengers from the *Durania*, all unnerved and a trifle hysterical. Down below the upper berth-deck of the cutter had been pressed into service as a hospital for the lesser injured. The graver cases were placed in the sick-bay. Kane, who should have been down there himself, scorned the confinement.

A roll-call held by the purser of the *Durania* disclosed the fact that of the four hundred passengers who had been aboard the vessel only fifty were unaccounted for. Of the officers and crew thirty-five, including her captain and chief engineer, had lost their lives. A contingent of six hundred people was aboard the Coast Guard cutter.

The first of the other rescue ships which had hurried to sea on receipt of the stricken *Durania's* call for aid arrived. She was the British cruiser *Penelope*.

She heaved to close by while her commander extended his congratulations to Captain Clark and regretted his own arrival at so late a period in operations.

"I'd like to borrow your surgeon," our captain megaphoned to him. The request was granted immediately.

The closest port was that of St Johns, Newfoundland. Our commanding officer decided to land his rescued people there. We left the charred hulk of the dead *Durania* astern and proceeded full speed for St Johns. The *Penelope* remained behind to keep an eye on the gutted vessel.

The sound of gunfire reached us soon. The commander of the British cruiser was having a little target practice in dispatching to the depths of the sea the smoking menace to navigation which was all that was left of the *Durania*.

Thirteen

AS THE ICE PATROL SEASON DREW TO A CLOSE OUR pet hate aboard the *Mohican* intensified his activity.

One of the reasons why he threw himself into his work with such exasperating frenzy was the lack of result. His earlier expectations of bringing to light from the bottom of the sea some little-known or new ichthyological specimen had not been gratified. Frankly, Professor Heinkle—"Bubble-eyes," as he was nicknamed by the crew—was disappointed.

Not that the Professor's subaqueous explorations had been totally devoid of reward. In the store-room just off the berth-deck which he used as his floating laboratory were stored row after row of bottles containing samples and specimens of marine and plant life generally found off the Grand Banks. Neatly labelled their scientific distinctions hit one squarely in the eye.

DRYANOPSETTA, CYANOPHYCEÆ, ZOARDICÆ, CALAMUS FUR-MARCHICUS, PSEUDODALAMUS ELONGATUS.

Although these awe-inspiring terms imparted an air of considerable mystery to those of the crew who tried to pronounce them, to the Professor himself they were a bit discouraging.

There was nothing new or revolutionary about them, none likely to make a tocsin of the name of Heinkle so that it would go ringing down through time in ichthyological circles as that of an outstanding member of this learned profession by virtue of his amazing discoveries in and contribution to pelagic science.

Our feud with Heinkle still continued at white heat. Unflagging in his own inspired pursuit of the denizens of the deep, he failed to consider the obvious fact that the crew of the *Mobican* was not equally moved by his own scientific fervour.

The duties we were paid to do and were expected to do we did not particularly mind. They were not over-arduous. We were just policemen on a maritime beat.

"See one iceberg an' you've seen 'em all," remarked Nelander aptly. "Make one Ice Patrol an' you've made 'em all!"

So such interpolations of fate, in the shape of derelicts to be destroyed, passengers to be saved from ships in peril, and like adventures, were welcomed for the variety they brought to what would otherwise prove intolerable monotony.

But we were not equally grateful for those variations introduced by the Professor. His innovations were merely work of a particularly uninspiring sort to laymen, imposed on us at periods we should otherwise have spent in rest.

It was no sinecure to work for hours on a windswept and freezing quarterdeck manning the winch-drum, paying out three thousand metres of cable on the end of which were secured dredges, trawls, and closing nets used for ferreting the bottom of the sea.

The Professor sensed our antagonism—he would have had to be as thick as a boiler-plate to have been blind to it—and tried in a vague, half-hearted way to imbue us with some of his own enthusiasm for the work. But the more we saw of him the more we loathed him and his labours. He came to be regarded as a

bête noire, some bespectacled, stunted gnome vomited from a smoky purgatory to make lives miserable for poor sailors.

"One more month," Nelander sighed, "and the patrol will be over an' we'll be headin' back to the States away from that frog-eyed old devil!"

Two bells had just struck up on the bridge—one o'clock of a foggy morning. Although the month was June, it was cold and clammy on the quarterdeck. We had been routed out of the warm berth-deck only a few minutes before to man the complex contraptions Professor Heinkle used in his research work.

The cutter's engines had been rung down to the stop position. In a few minutes the way would be off the ship. Once she was hove to and drifting idly on the quiet sea the much-detested scientific work would begin.

It was Kane's unpleasant duty to rouse us for Heinkle. My friend was now a coxswain, elevated to that rating by Captain Clark for conspicuous valour during rescue operations on the *Durania* some days earlier. It was now the giant red-head's duties to see that the proper reliefs for the wheel and look-out were made, to muster the lifeboat crew when we came on watch, and in general to direct the duties and work of the port-watch.

Kane responded reluctantly to the information given him by the quartermaster of the watch when he came down from the bridge to tell him that the cutter would be hove to for the purpose of enabling Professor Heinkle to conduct another series of oceanic explorations.

"All right, boys, let's go!" He awakened us unwillingly. "We have a date with old Bubble-eyes himself up on the quarterdeck."

A lugubrious howl rose from the stirring crew as from some cornered, helpless animal in pain.

"I know how it is," Kane sympathized. "But what the hell can we do about it? Orders are orders. So shake a leg!"

We filed grumblingly up through a hatch leading to the fog-wreathed quarterdeck. Professor Heinkle awaited us. He stood wiping the mist off his thick-lensed spectacles. At intervals the

deep-throated fog-whistle on the cutter's funnel hooted mockingly at our debasement.

"You're a little slow in getting the m-men up here, K-Kane," he reproved. "We have quite a l-little work to do this morning. You sh-should have had all the equipment rigged up f-five minutes ago."

"Which net do you figure on usin'?" Kane asked, ignoring the reprimand.

"The plankton. Now h-hurry things up and let's get organized."

By far the largest, most voluminous, and cursedly awkward net in Professor Heinkle's extensive repertoire was this self-same plankton. Moreover, it was only used at the maximum depths, which meant we could look forward to paying out no less than three thousand metres of cable, every inch of which would have to be carefully wiped dry after it was hauled from the sea, oiled off with sperm oil, then guided and wound on to the winch-drum. And at one o'clock on a cold, foggy morning after being routed from a warm sleep!

Hell's bells!

"Too bad we're not lowerin' him three thousand metres instead of the net," hissed Nelander, who could not restrain his resentment. "That'd give him a good chance to get acquainted with what's goin' on down there!"

"Come on, come on, Kane!" urged the Professor impatiently. It seemed we were taking too much time in the preparations. "Y-you don't seem to have m-much of a grip on your men. Why, Jensen w-would have had the net half-way d-down by this time." Jensen was the former coxswain of the port-watch and now an assistant to the Master-at-arms.

Kane growled in reply: "Take it easy, Professor. It takes time to get this thing rigged up. We'll be ready in a few minutes. Those things down below won't mind waitin' on us for a few seconds——"

"N-none of your sarcasm!" the Professor broke in sharply. "Any m-more and I'll make a report of the matter. There's b-been enough delay from you. I don't believe," remarked the

ichthyologist with sudden inspiration, "you are p-particularly sympathetic towards my work."

A derisive noise coming from somewhere among the group of somnolent sailors caused Heinkle to peer sharply through the fog at us.

"Who did that?" he demanded irascibly.

"Somebody sneezed!" said Donovan.

"Cut out the fooling," said Kane, struggling with the net. "Pass me those weights, Bart."

I carried him the two heavy spherical iron weights which were secured to the end of the cable to hold it taut during its descent. Kane attached them.

"The net, Beach!"

Nelander gathered the folds of the plankton and hauled it to the rail, where Kane stood on a gangway grating.

"The cup, Paddy!"

Donovan brought him the precious enamel container which the Professor hoped would entrap some unfamiliar bit of marine life on which he could balloon to scientific renown. Kane secured it to the bottom of the net.

"C-careful, careful!" snapped Heinkle. "Don't tear it!"

Weights, net, and cup now secured, Kane gave a signal to Chile Smythe, who was operating the electric winch.

"Lower away!"

Down . . . down into the cold black depths of the Labrador Current sank the huge net. The winch whirled smoothly as it paid out three thousand metres of cable.

"We'll let it remain down f-for half an hour," decided the Professor, peering over the side.

"In that case," said Kane, "we might as well go down below an' get a swallow of coffee."

"Leave one man on deck to watch the cable," the Professor insisted quickly.

"All right," Kane grunted. "Stay up here and keep the Professor company, Paul. I'll send you up a cup of coffee later. The rest of you can go below."

Heinkle had a very good reason for wishing that a man should

be detailed to keep an eye on the cable when the nets were allowed to rest on the bottom of the sea for thirty minutes or so. Some weeks before while aboard the *Cherokee*, while crew and scientist were below warming themselves with coffee, some hallowed opportunist had cast loose the cable from the winch-drum. The cable sank to long-deserved peace in company with the net three thousand metres below.

There being no other line of that length aboard the *Cherokee*, ichthyological investigation was at an end until the cutter was relieved and returned to Halifax, where a new cable could be purchased from a ship's chandler. The Professor howled of sabotage and made frantic demands for a board of inquiry. The officials met with no success in their endeavour to find the culprit. Nobody in the crew was anywhere near the cable when it disappeared. Nobody was even anywhere near anybody who might have been in the remote vicinity of anybody who was near the cable when it disappeared.

Professor Heinkle was taking no further chances.

I did not thank Kane for the duty he imposed on me. I should have liked to have gone below with the rest of the watch. Heinkle's company was no consolation.

I was surprised to hear him speak to me, for generally his conversation with the crew was brief and to the point and concerned itself only with his work.

"I understand you are from Australia, Bart?"

"That's right."

"Marvellous country, in my opinion."

"Yes," I agreed, "it is. I'm thinking of returning upon the expiration of my enlistment."

"Don't you like America?"

"Sure I like it. There's only one complaint I have to make."

"Yes?"

"Prohibition and wowsers."

"Wowsers?"

"Australian for reformers. We don't have 'em down there."

"Human behaviour requires regulation, Bart. Prohibition is a v-very desirable restriction."

"Don't drink, Professor?" I asked, with mild curiosity.

"No."

"Ever been out with a girl, Professor?"

"Out with——?"

"In a sailor's sense."

"S-sexual cohabitation beyond the m-married state is sheer depravity."

"Isn't it our occasional depravity which makes us human?"

"To return to Australia," he said hastily. "I s-suppose you are acquainted with numerous specimens of p-pelagic life to be found off the Great Barrier Reef? What a t-treasure house of research that Reef w-would be to a man of my inclinations!" he remarked. "Tell me s-something about it."

My acquaintance with the pelagic life off the Great Barrier Reef was confined to the pursuit of trepang and bêche-de-mer while aboard a Malay pearl schooner in the years before the war, an episode already related in another book.

"Well," I told him, "we have a fish which swims backwards."

"Indeed?" The Professor's interest was immediately aroused. "That's most peculiar. What consideration influences it t-to-behave in that extraordinary f-fashion?"

"To keep the water out of its eyes."

Heinkle looked at me suspiciously.

"We had another strange fish," I informed him, this time with more truth. "'Pelorus Jack,' of New Zealand. He was protected by an Act of Parliament. Used to pilot ships through the Cook Strait between the North and South Islands of the Dominion of New Zealand."

"Sounds like some legend of Greek mythology," said the Professor.

Kane appeared bearing a cup of coffee for me and thus saved me from further elaboration on the subject of the unique Pelorus Jack, which *was* a fish and which *was* protected by an Act of the New Zealand Parliament.

"Kane will tell you about pelagic life off the Australian coasts, Professor, while I drink my coffee."

"Pelagic life?" My friend looked blank. "What the hell is

that? Now if you'd like me to tell you something about Australian brothels, Professor, I'd be——"

Heinkle's interest in Antipodean brothels was small. He walked out of earshot, muttering to himself.

Our half-hour respite went by. Kane called the watch up from the berth-deck for the weary task of hauling up the long cable. Great drops of cold rain began splashing on us before fifteen hundred metres were wound on the winch-drum. The deck became slippery underfoot. In a fit of perversity the winch motor blew a fuse.

"Go down below an' rake out the electrician, Donovan," said Kane. "Tell him to put in a new fuse for us. The rest of you go below an' shift into a dry change of clothes while we're waiting."

Another delay of ten minutes. When we returned to the quarterdeck we were met by a torrential downpour. The rain drove into our eyes, seeped through our oilskins, and trickled down our legs into our rubber seaboots. Above the hiss of the deluge we could hear the humming, whirring sound of the motor hoisting up the lengthy cable and nets from far below.

"I'll be glad when this watch is over," moaned Nelander, who stood alongside me wiping off the wire after it came through the fairlead.

"Rotten night," I shouted agreement. "But it won't be long now. Only about another two hundred metres to come up."

On the gangway grating stood Kane looking down at the sea for a glimpse of the net when it should break water. Near by was Professor Heinkle shouting spasmodic orders at Chile Smythe, the winchman, to speed up the motor and thus accelerate the ascent of the net.

"Easy, Chile!" cried Kane, as the net broke water. "Take it easy now."

A sigh of relief ran over the watch on the wet deck at the appearance of the net. A few minutes longer and then we should be free to secure the sounding machine and go below from the torment of what promised to be a nasty night.

The motor blew another fuse!

Chile Smythe slipped to the deck throwing the winch-brake out of gear as he fell. Three thousand metres of cable whizzed from the unrolling drum, cable which we had so painstakingly wiped off, so laboriously oiled and guided on to the drum. In two or three minutes the net rested on the bottom of the sea again. There was the whole performance for us to repeat.

The wail of frustration and fury which arose from the watch could have been heard all over the ship.

"That's w-what you g-get for b-being careless!" the Professor screamed, excitement emphasizing the virulency of his stutter.

"Pipe down, you fish-eyed Jonah!" shouted Nelander, almost beside himself with fury.

"I'll r-report this," cried Heinkle. "I'll——"

"You'll get the hell out of the way until we get things squared away again," said Kane, with dangerous calm. "If you hang around here much longer I won't be responsible for what might happen to you. An' you can report all you damn' well like!"

If ever a crew of a United States Coast Guard cutter was on the brink of mutiny it was that of the *Mobican* that night. The dank, fog-choked air was electrified with incipient violence. The Professor sidled off.

Once more we took stations, repeated the irksome process of winding in and tending the cable, cursing in relays. Twenty minutes before we were to be relieved by the starboard watch the net again hove into view.

"Easy now, Chile!" Kane implored.

We took no chances of a duplication of the previous disaster, so stopped off the cable with a length of rope. The net was brought up a few feet at a time from the surface of the sea, and when it was within reaching distance Kane leaned out from the grating and removed the precious enamel container at the bottom of the net while we hauled the net itself over the side.

Professor Heinkle snatched the small receptacle from Kane greedily as though it contained some priceless elixir of life and hastened down the hatch to his seagoing laboratory to examine its contents.

We secured the sounding machine and went below ourselves.

"Just for the hell of it," Kane suggested, as we drank a cup of warm coffee before turning in, "let's drop in on old Bubble-eyes an' see if he found anythin' that might make up for all that misery we had to put up with to-night."

"I've seen all I want to of that bird. The hell with him!"

"Let's kid him a little. Most likely he's found nothin' he ain't found before."

I allowed myself to be persuaded. Heinkle was in no mood to let himself be kidded. We found him hunched over his microscope squinting through it at something on a glass slide.

"Find anythin' after all that tough work, Professor?" asked Kane, feigning a tone of interest.

Heinkle waved him into silence with an agitated motion of his hand. "Quiet!" he hissed, in a voice unsteady with emotion. I looked at him curiously.

"What is it, Professor?" Kane insisted.

"Boys——" Heinkle looked up at us with shining eyes. "I've really got s-something this t-time," he said huskily. He tapped the microscope with a trembling finger. "And here it is—s-something entirely unknown t-to p-pelagic life, on that I'll s-stake my reputation!" He beckoned to us. "S-see for yourselves!" he urged us triumphantly.

To my untutored eye the object I stared at, greatly magnified through the instrument, presented an appearance not so vastly different from numerous other specimens we had dredged from the sea on other occasions. It was a shapeless object sprouting something like tentacles and had two bulging eyes. "Looks like an octopus," I defined. Kane thought it resembled a species of Portuguese man-o'-war.

Professor Heinkle snorted at our ignorance.

"After all," said Kane, mollifyingly, "we're only sailors. What would we know about all this?"

Heinkle pointed a shaking hand at a row of thick volumes neatly packed in a bookcase secured to a bulkhead near where he stood.

"N-none of these books c-contain anything even r-remotely s-suggesting a classification of this outstanding d-discovery of

mine," he told us. "It will r-remain for me to give it a n-name!" he declared, with perceptible swelling of the chest. Momentarily he seemed to forget us, for his eyes were fixed on some distant object unseen to us, and his following words were almost as if he spoke them to himself. "Wait until they h-hear about this back at the university! My n-name will b-be a household word among ichthyologists the world over! I s-shall be asked t-to write and deliver a p-paper on this extraordinary find. Some wealthy alumnus, perhaps"—there appeared to be no end to the Professor's facile assumptions—"—may even endow a Ch-chair of Ichthyology in my honour! I shall be invited to deliver l-lectures at other universities and colleges, not only in th-the United States, b-but throughout the world!"

I listened with but half an ear. My closing eyes fought off sleep.

"Maybe we can help you give it a name," Kane grinned.

"I am open t-to suggestions, of course," said the Professor, "but I doubt if any assistance y-you could offer would be constructive in v-view of your limited acquaintance with the science of i-ichthyology. However," he conceded generously, "you and the other m-men of the port-watch have every right to sh-share with me the unusual distinction which w-will come my way for this discovery in that your efforts were in no s-small measure responsible for it."

"Call him Bertie," said Kane. "That's a good tag. *Mohican* Bertie."

"I'm afraid that would not prove acceptable," Heinkle returned. "It would have to be a Latin term."

"Well, it'll do until you find a better one," chuckled Kane.

"Come on," I said. "I'm falling asleep standing. Good-night, Professor."

"G-good-night, boys—good-night!" said Heinkle heartily, still in his expansive mood. "And thank you, thank y-you."

Back aft in the berth-deck we undressed by the dim light of the standing lamp. Nelander was still up. He lay in his bunk smoking a cigarette.

"Where you guys been?" he asked curiously.

"Helpin' the Professor get famous," said Kane with a yawn.

"Yeah?" returned Nelander sourly. "You know where I'd help that guy get?"

He told us. It won't hurt you not to know.

The whole ship was astir over the news of the night's find when we awoke in the morning. The Professor was being congratulated by the officers and had been given an invitation to dinner by the captain.

The university from which Heinkle had taken sabbatical leave was informed by radio of its distinguished son's contribution to the science of ichthyology. So proud was the Professor of the congratulatory response from the seat of learning that he posted a copy of it on the crew's bulletin board.

Accept sincerest congratulations on your most important discovery Stop please radio details of this brilliant find incorporating physical characteristics of specimen Stop perhaps we may be of assistance in aiding classification.

Heinkle lost no time in drafting a return message embodying in it a description of the physical characteristics of the oceanic oddity briefly baptized Bertie by Kane.

Back through a thousand miles of space came the university's reply later in the day. It was delivered to the glowing Professor during the course of the congratulatory dinner given to him by Captain Clark.

Information acknowledged Stop no record of classification pertaining to your find available Stop primary investigation leads us to believe it may be related to *Calanus Furmarchicus* family Stop Professor Drayton inclined to think it may also be related to *Euchæta norvegica* Stop be assured all laboratory facilities are concentrated in attempt to classify specimen Stop again accept our congratulations.

Upon the bulletin board was posted this second message for the perusal of the crew. The Professor was a new man.

"Kane," he said, halting the former on deck, "I want you t-to know that I w-would like to express my appreciation of the

s-splendid co-operation and help of the p-port-watch given me last night."

"Forget it, Professor," Kane told him briefly. "It was all in a day's work. We were glad of the chance to help make you famous."

"B-but believe my appreciation," insisted Heinkle. "All of you can draw a c-carton of cigarettes from the canteen—and ch-charge it to me."

"Thanks, Professor. The boys will certainly appreciate that." That the professional and semi-professional outside world had been informed of Heinkle's good fortune we discovered from reading the daily copy of Press news wirelessly to all shipping by the powerful naval radio station at Arlington, Virginia.

A discovery hitherto unknown to the science of ichthyology was made yesterday by Professor Olaf Heinkle of ——— University, who is spending part of his sabbatical year in research work off the Grand Banks of Newfoundland aboard the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Mohican*, now on International Ice Patrol in those waters. The discovery is said to be causing great interest in ichthyological circles. Invitations to eminent ichthyologists all over the country have been sent by the university to examine this unusual sample of pelagic life upon its arrival.

Professor Heinkle carefully placed Bertie in a preservative solution and deposited the bottled specimen in Captain Clark's private safe against the day when it would be sent to the university for examination and identification by the great of the ichthyological world.

So many radio messages were now being received aboard the cutter as an aftermath to Bertie's discovery that extra wireless operators were detailed to handle the heavy traffic. Messages from pundits in old and distinguished European seats of learning were pouring in congratulating the Professor and requesting information.

The university so distinctively represented by the renowned Heinkle wanted tangible evidence of the cause of its pride and wanted it fast. So another radiogram was received by the *Mohican* and pasted up on the crew's bulletin board.

Contact R.M.S. *Westonia* at appointed rendezvous to-morrow and transfer Heinkle specimen for shipment to Boston Stop sea-plane will meet *Westonia* off Nantucket Light and fly specimen Stop advise take all precautions with valuable specimen.

This latest bulletin made a stir aboard the cutter. For one of the crack transatlantic greyhounds like the Royal Mail steamer *Westonia* to stop and heave to from her regular twenty-eight-knot clip for the purpose of transferring the Professor's specimen was a most unusual event. A day's delay in the delivery of mails would cost the owners a pretty penny in forfeitures. Crack ships like the *Westonia* are run on strict schedules scrupulously adhered to. The transfer had undoubtedly cost the university quite a sum, too. Then there was the matter of the plane meeting the ship off Nantucket Light. The expense, we reasoned, would run into substantial money. We looked at Heinkle in a new light, that of an important world figure now. One more patrol aboard the *Cherokee* before the Ice Patrol season ended and then he would go back to Boston and his university to reap the plaudits his indefatigable labours deserved.

The *Mobican* proceeded to the appointed rendezvous (latitude 41 degrees 45 minutes north, longitude 47 degrees 30 minutes west), at which position we expected to meet the *Westonia* as radioed contact had arranged.

We came up on each other at night. The *Mobican's* powerful searchlights were trained up into the sky for the benefit of the *Westonia's* look-outs. A full moon directed her glow on us. Up on the *Mobican's* bridge five bells rang out—10.30 P.M.

"*Westonia* in sight!" came the word ringing down from the crow's nest shortly before eleven o'clock. Our whole crew had refused to turn in and was awaiting the liner's arrival.

Professor Heinkle stood beside Captain Clark on the cutter's bridge trying to conceal his emotion. Through powerful binoculars he regarded the swift approach of the ship that was to convey tangible proof of his inspired labours to the world at large.

From the main-deck we of the port-watch who had been responsible for bringing up from the bottom of the sea the cause

of all the night's excitement watched the giant liner hoist her glowing hull over the horizon, her searchlights, like ours, trained up into the sky. Like a colossal illuminated beehive she raced towards us.

The central figure of the night's drama now came down from the bridge with his precious specimen held tightly in his hands. He took his seat in the sternsheets of the surfboat which was to effect the transfer.

At last the *Westonia* ran abeam of us and hove to. We looked up at her towering sides bathed in the glare of clusters of lights from her brilliant deck crowded with curious passengers. The strains of gay Viennese music floated from her ballroom over the peaceful waters.

Professor Heinkle climbed aboard her by the waiting ladder and was met by the ship's purser, who gave him a receipt for his priceless specimen. He assured the worried Heinkle that it would be safely kept in the liner's strong room until the seaplane was contacted off Nantucket Light.

The Professor returned to our waiting surfboat. Engine-room telegraphs clanged out down in the *Westonia's* bowels. Her racing turbines kicked up a milky froth astern and she moved away. In another half-hour she was gone from our view.

According to the shipping news dispatches there was some conflict of opinion about Bertie's possible antecedents. The scientists could not agree on his derivation, because, perhaps, none of his mystifying family had ever before been drawn up through three thousand metres of cold water in a sealed enamel container.

No more research was made on the Ice Patrol. Professor Heinkle packed his nets and samples and impatiently awaited the passing of the days before the *Mohican* was to be relieved by her sister ship *Cherokee*, on which he had left part of his gear from earlier patrols.

He eagerly awaited some word from the university in acknowledgment of Bertie's receipt. It came—a startling message which made the Professor blanch, and drew globules of sweat from his brow. This was one radiogram which did not go up

on the bulletin board, but we got it from the wireless man who received it.

Professor Hans Zoole of Rotterdam of our faculty pro tem positively identifies your specimen as *Cimex lectularius* after thorough cleansing with sodium hydroxide revealing more clearly earlier baffling physical structure and organic peculiarities Stop cannot understand your motive for this flagrant fraud Stop will hold you strictly accountable for explanation.

"Who's *Cimex lectularius*?" I asked Iodine Mike, the *Mohican's* chief pharmacist's mate, the only one aboard accessible to me at the time likely to be possessed of some Latin.

He grinned. "Just another name for Bertie—the bedbug!"

Professor Heinkle went into brooding seclusion. We saw him no more on that patrol. He kept himself sequestered in his state-room and had his meals brought to him there.

I asked Kane a question the whole of the crew *Mohican* were asking each other.

"How d'you suppose that bedbug got into the container on the plankton net?"

He glanced quickly around and rumbled amusement in his deep chest.

"Remember when I leaned over the side an' unhooked that container from the net that night? Well"—a covert glance from the corner of his eyes at Captain Clark pacing the quarter-deck—"I had Bertie ready in a matchbox!"

Fourteen

HEAVE TO!" READ THE SIGNAL-HOIST FLYING FROM the gaff of the mizzen-mast of the three-masted French fishing barquentine *Saint-Jean*.

We were bound north to trail an iceberg reported by a Canadian revenue cutter as having drifted into transatlantic

shipping lanes. Our last few days of patrol before the *Cherokee* relieved us seemed to be occupied in this duty.

The *Saint-Jean* was no stranger to us. We frequently ran across her or her sister fishing craft in their pillage of the sea. Also, it had been to this vessel that Olaf had been banished by Captain Clark.

The *Mohican* changed course and headed over to where the Frenchman lay at anchor, a long string of dories trailing astern. It was Sunday, a day on which no religious Frenchman will fish.

"Wonder what's the matter over there?" speculated Donovan as we stood at the rail watching the water between the cutter and the fishing-boat dwindle.

"Perhaps they've mutinied," suggested Kane, hopefully anticipating some action.

"Frogs don't mutiny on Sunday," stated Nelander authoritatively. "Most likely some snail-eater has run a fish-hook into his hand and wants our sawbones to take it out for him."

If so, it would not be the first time that Dr Wilcoxon had performed that humanitarian duty. Fish-hooks, common calamity among the fishing fleet, require a surgeon's skill when deeply imbedded in flesh.

"There's somethin' over there all right," said Kane, shading his eyes. "I can see a crowd of frogs up in her fore riggin'. There's two of 'em out on the royal yard——"

"Maybe a snail-eater went nuts an' is hidin' out on 'em aloft?" hazarded Nelander.

This was not such an unlikely event, either. Long months of confinement aboard these fishing vessels sometimes work havoc with a man's mind. The Ice Patrol cutters only spent twenty-one days at sea out of each month. The fishing vessels were at sea from April until September—five months of unremitting labour and one another's monotonous company.

As we approached the *Saint-Jean* we noticed that the gaskets had been thrown off the yard letting the sail fall and indicating incipient departure. This was a strange procedure for the vessel to follow. Royals, being the lightest sails aboard and also the loftiest on such boats, are not set until the courses and other

heavier sails are set. They are, in fact, usually the last sails to be set on a square-rigged ship.

"Maybe they do things different on them snail-eatin' packets," Nelander surmised. "Still," he pointed out wonderingly, "they ain't even got the hook up yet. Always did hear that frogs was lousy sailors. Now I know they are."

Kane's arm shot out as he pointed a thick finger at the French vessel's yards.

"Don't you recognize who they're after?" he chuckled. We stared. "It's Olaf!" It was.

Within hailing distance of the *Saint-Jean* Captain Clark rang the *Mohican's* engines down. The cutter, now that the way was off her, drifted idly to rise and fall on the long ground swells rolling across the Grand Banks.

No use to attempt to parlez-vous through a megaphone, our commanding officer must have reasoned, for no effort was made to hail the French vessel. Obviously Captain Clark was waiting for the barquentine's skipper to come aboard us. Then Donovan, who could speak the language with fair fluency, could act as interpreter, and there would be no bar to complete understanding of the Frenchman's needs.

One of the dories astern the fisherman was hauled alongside. Over the side and into it descended a black-bearded Frenchman. Two sailors pulled over to where the cutter lay to.

Captain Clark met the Frenchman on the quarterdeck with Donovan who had been summoned to stand by. The skipper of the *Saint-Jean*, burly, bearded, poured a torrent of quick French over our captain, his arms flailing like windmills.

"What's he saying, Donovan?" asked Captain Clark. "If he has mutiny aboard tell him we have no jurisdiction over French vessels, but will stand by him until a French gunboat is called by radio. Let him know we fell in with the *Martinique* only two days ago."

The latter was a French gunboat which brought medical aid to the fishing fleet during the months spent off the Grand Banks. We had sighted her two days before bound in to the small French possession of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon, two small

islands south of Newfoundland, later to be used as a great rum-running base.

Donovan heard out the Frenchman's violent eloquence with a smile.

"It's no mutiny, sir," he assured Captain Clark. "It's Olaf. Captain Dubois says we'll have to take him back. Seems like Olaf's been making quite a nuisance of himself from the day he got aboard the *Saint-Jean*."

Captain Dubois, who had momentarily lapsed into silence to give Donovan an opportunity to translate his pique, could contain himself no longer on hearing that provoking name.

"Oolaff! Oolaff! Oolaff!" he mouthed in corroboration, red-faced, heaving with the memory of his tribulations.

"What's Olaf done?" asked our captain wonderingly.

"Could answer that better, sir, by telling you what Olaf hasn't done," said Donovan. "It would be easier. As far as I can gather from this chap Olaf has been raising merry hell all over that ship."

"I'm not surprised," Captain Clark interpolated drily.

"Tore the skipper's shoregoing clothes which he bought just before sailing to get married in when he gets back after the season," enumerated Donovan, catching Captain Dubois' furious specifications on the wing and tossing them to the *Mobican's* commander. "Made a mess in the chief officer's bunk one night, and—er—the chief officer didn't discover it until he awoke in the morning. Upset a bucket of tar in the cook's Mess-pot. Threw the gaskets off the sails. Threw fish overboard. Stole tobacco——"

"Ah—enough, enough!" Captain Clark broke in a bit guiltily, giving the French skipper an uneasy glance. "Perhaps we should have done better not to have—er—foisted Olaf on these fishermen. Tell Captain Dubois we'll take Olaf back. We'll turn him over to the zoo when we get back to Halifax."

Donovan translated. Captain Dubois replied with vigour.

"Olaf's up in the rigging," said the interpreter, "and won't come down. Captain Dubois wants us to send over for him. Olaf made no friends aboard, and they can't do anything with him."

Captain Clark looked over at the *Saint-Jean*. Against the blue sky was silhouetted a small, compact bundle on the vessel's topgallant mast. Our commanding officer took in the situation and solution at once.

"Nelander!" he called.

"Yes, captain?"

"Accompany Captain Dubois back to the *Saint-Jean* and retrieve Olaf—er—that ape from the rigging and return to the ship with him."

"Aye, aye, sir," Nelander beamed delightedly.

From the cutter we watched the Dane climb into the fore rigging of the Frenchman. He did not have to climb higher than the upper topsail. Olaf recognized him. Down the hal-yards he slithered in hand-over-hand fashion at a speed which invoked our admiration, and leaped into Nelander's arms. There was a fond reunion on the upper topsail yard, and then the two descended to the deck. So delighted apparently were the Frenchmen at being rid of Olaf that they pressed a bottle of something on Nelander, who drank it in plain, mocking view of all of us, tossing the bottle over the side when he had finished.

"I oughta have let him drown," muttered Kane darkly, appalled at such treachery.

Captain Clark eyed Olaf ruefully as he came aboard with Nelander.

"Hear me," he told the latter. "I'm holding you responsible for Olaf's actions until we return to Halifax. The first bad move on his part and you and he go into the brig for the rest of the patrol."

"I'll keep a sharp eye on him, sir," Nelander promised.

"I trust so," said Captain Clark fervently. "I trust so."

So Olaf, the talented prodigal, was back. We began to devise some means of outmanœuvring the suddenly watchful Famine Levy and Ali Baba, the Jack-of-the-dust, as we reacquainted Olaf with the interior of the well-stocked store-room.

No other seagoing service in the world holds excellence in oarsmanship and small-boat work in higher esteem than does

the United States Coast Guard, proficiency in those drills being demanded of every man aboard the cutters from commanding officer down to the lowliest negro or Filipino Mess attendant.

In keeping with this tradition there were no fewer than six boats' crews aboard the *Mobican*. The officers had a crew. The black-gang, Mess attendants, artificer's branch each had one. The deck-force had two crews, one for each watch. Ample opportunity was found for practice during the long patrols at sea, the boats being lowered over the side whenever the weather permitted. The various crews competed with each other, the prizes being awarded by the cutter's canteen. It was usually a carton of cigarettes.

From these six crews was selected a star crew of ten men to make up the cutter's varsity crew, a unit which was expected to represent the *Mobican* in racing duels with other cutters, foreign or American ships-of-war when the opportunity for these engagements presented itself.

Such an eventuality was being precipitated by the closing of the Ice Patrol season. It is customary for the two patrol cutters to compete against each other in a race to be pulled over a two-mile course for the championship of the International Ice Patrol. This event is usually conducted when one or the other of the cutters is about to make her last patrol of the year. The *Cherokee*, now on her way out from Halifax to make her final patrol, would afterwards return to her home port. The *Mobican*, due into Halifax for her customary in-port period, then would police her last beat of the season.

Four men were contributed by the port-watch to the crew of ten which made up the boat crew—Kane, Nelander, Chile Smythe, and myself. The starboard-watch was represented by three members. The wardroom furnished young Ensign Fleming, a last year's graduate of the Coast Guard Academy, with considerable inter-collegiate experience behind him. The black-gang contributed two hefty firemen.

Surfboat Joe was our coxswain and mentor. He had no peer. A hard, merciless taskmaster, a flaming, cursing driver, he ignored rank and position, age and quality, only concentrating on the

desired perfection of a quick getaway in a racing start and the proper handling of oars in a race.

"Wake up, Fleming, damn you!" he would bellow at the young ensign. "You ain't pullin' for dear old Alma Mater. You're pullin' for a man's ship—the '*Mobican*'. Put some snap in your follow-throughs!"

Or:

"Bart, feather that goddamn' oar!"

Or:

"Chile, you give me a royal pain in the stern. Catch one more crab like that an' I'll throw you out of the crew!"

Or:

"Von Tirpitz!" a snarl at the German from the starboard-watch who had once served as an officer on a Hun submarine during the Great War and who was nicknamed after the Teuton admiral. "You might have pulled that way in the Boche navy, but it don't do here! Use your back, bend that oar!"

Kane rowed stroke under the watchful eye of the galley master. Starboard stroke was Nelander. At a nod or word from our elderly tyrant Kane would increase the stroke from twenty-five to thirty or thirty-five to the minute.

"All right, you swabs!" Joe would yell. "Follow the stroke! Bend those oars!"

"Goddamn that old slave driver!" panted Ensign Fleming, who pulled opposite oar to me at No. 4 thwart. "I thought I pulled under some hardboiled coxswains during my Academy days, but they were softies compared to this Surfboat Joe."

Yet ashore Joe was a different man. Gone was the irritable, cursing fiend who lashed us with tongue and glare. Everybody's friend, everybody's drinking companion, every woman's would-be lover, he showed no indication of the metamorphosis which could be his when he sat in his surfboat and made straining demons of his men.

His tutelage was expert. He developed in us harmonious rhythm, co-ordination, morale, and pride in performance. So confident were we of the result of our impending duel with the

crew of the *Cherokee* that we were prepared to bet a month's pay on ourselves.

On a morning of clear, bright sunshine our sister cutter made contact with us. The sea was placid as a mountain lake. Even the ground swell was lacking. The only other object on the calm Atlantic besides the two cutters was the glistening edifice of a late season berg we had been guarding.

It was usual for the cutter being relieved to lower a boat and pull over to the newcomer for the purpose of picking up mail, transferring the Ice Observer and his staff, etc. But it was the *Cherokee* who lowered a boat this time. Oars sweeping in long, rhythmic strokes it came to us, and, instead of coming up under our lee side as was customary, it passed by our stern, 'tossing oars' as it did so. That symbol had but one traditional meaning for us.

CHALLENGE!

We were prepared and eager to accept that invitation to test supremacy in a boat race. The captain of the *Cherokee* came aboard us and conferred with our commanding officer relative to the rules to be observed during the forthcoming encounter. Accompanying him was a bevy of eager *Cherokee* betters anxious to place money on the outcome of the race. We covered their bets promptly on a chit basis. The crews of both ships had no ready cash on hand. We mortgaged a month's pay on ourselves. Bets were to be paid the following pay-day.

Eager, willing masseurs gave us a last-minute rub-down, after which Captain Clark held us in exhortatory inspiration.

"I expect you men to win. You are undoubtedly the better crew, and you have the best race-boat coxswain in the Coast Guard handling the steering-oar. Anyway, I've wagered a month's pay of my own against Captain Wilson. . . ."

A signal from the *Cherokee* told us she was ready. We were stripped to the waist. Wearing only bathing trunks, we took our places in the surfboat awaiting us and drew away from the *Mohican* to the encouraging cheers of the cutter's crew manning the rails.

It was a two-mile course we were to race with the stern of

our cutter as starting-point and that of our opponent's as finishing line. The latter's ship was slowly drawing away to take her post, while the Ice Observer, impartial to both ships since he belonged to neither, attended the six-pounder blank charge which was to send both crews into action. At an approximate half-way point between the cutters towered the impassive immensity of ice which we were using as a centre marker.

The *Cherokee* signalled that she was in position, and both surfboats jockeyed for position off the *Mobican's* stern.

"Now don't forget what I've been tellin' you," said old Joe. "Dip. Pull through. Snap back. Feather and stretch. There ain't no reason for us not beatin' those guys from the *Cherokee*. In fact, we've got to! I got a reputation to think of. I've never lost a race yet, an' I don't want to start now on what will most likely be my last one. Anyway," he encouraged us, "we've really got the edge on the *Cherokee* crowd. They've just come out of Halifax boozin' an' runnin' around with scuppers while we've been livin' a clean life—for the last eighteen days, at least."

"Listen, Joe," threw over the coxswain of the other surfboat who had been listening to the remarks of the old chief gunner's mate, "if you think my crew has been boozin' an' chasin' around with skirts in Halifax you've got a surprise comin' in your old age. None of us has touched a drop of hooch for the last two weeks, an' we ain't smoked, either. We're goin' to pull those big ears of yours off—just you see!"

"Pay no attention to them silly swabs," said Joe scornfully. "They're just tryin' to get our goat."

A hail drifted down to us from the *Mobican's* stern. It came from the starter.

"Ready down there in the boats?"

"Ready, sir!" acknowledged Joe.

"Ready, sir!" cried the *Cherokee's* coxswain.

"Stand by!" came the staccato warning. The six-pounder boomed out.

We were off!

I have taken part in many sports in my time—Rugby, football, marathon swimming, cricket, track and field running, and

water-polo—but I have found none comparable to the gruelling grind over the regulation two-mile Coast Guard course in a heavy duty, twenty-six-foot, carvel-built monomoy surfboat. It was one which taxed the utmost in stamina and physical effort.

The start, all circumstances being considered, is a good half of any race. We gained a full half-length on the *Cherokee's* boat by using the six short strokes of the racing start which Joe had made us practise for so many tearing hours to get ready for this event. Kane had already received his instructions from our coxswain before the race, and knew what was expected of him. He settled down to a steady thirty-to-the-minute stroke. We fell in with the rhythm of our giant stroke oarsman and retained our small lead.

From the cutters came a hooting of whistles and sirens and the faint shouts of excited partisans. In the sternsheets of our boat, his face set and grim, his hands grasped firmly about the heavy steering-oar, Surfboat Joe stood, his rugged body bent, swaying forward and back in time with the stroke. As we neared the lofty iceberg marking the half-way point for the race our opponents' boat began to forge ahead slowly but surely, their coxswain having increased the stroke. Surfboat Joe ignored this threat and let them draw ahead.

Once abeam of the jagged ice peril he spoke quietly to Kane. Up went our stroke to a full thirty-five to the minute—a murderous stroke which we were obliged to follow. My hands, tough as they were, began to blister. The *Cherokee's* coxswain noted the acceleration. Up went their stroke as well.

Both boats pulled bow to bow, neither able to gain on the other. Trained as we were and enjoying a toughened physical perfection, we now began to realize that the *Cherokee's* boast that their men had been faithfully training also was no idle talk.

Thirty-five strokes to the minute. Not alone were my hands beginning to blister, but my seat as well. It was almost scraped raw from contact with the wooden thwart on which I sat. My breath whistled from my convulsive lungs trying to keep pace with the terrific strain imposed on them. Like the beat of a

giant sledge-hammer pounded my heart. Throbbing temples echoed in sympathy.

No time now to ask the gasping Fleming pulling opposite me how he felt. Hardly time for a passing glance to note his clenched teeth, raw hands, and agonized face.

I wondered how long I could keep it up.

"They must crack! They must crack!" The thought shouted inside my head. The *Cherokee's* crew couldn't maintain that pace. They were no supermen. Yet bow to bow they threshed abeam of us, stroke for stroke, groan for groan.

A quarter-mile from the *Cherokee's* stern Surfboat Joe spoke a few words from tight lips that made me think pride in a desired achievement had caused him to go temporarily insane.

"Time to kill off their challenge, Kane. Step it up to forty!"

Forty strokes to the minute!

It couldn't be done—couldn't be done—just couldn't—

Up went the stroke to forty to the minute.

I cursed Joe with sobbing breath. I cursed Kane for his own obstinate madness to lend himself to the coxswain's lunacy. The stroke was beyond human prowess—incredible! I cursed Kane for that barrel-like chest of his, those blacksmith arms and mighty shoulders which made it possible for him to pioneer in the unbelievable.

The *Cherokee's* challenge was definitely killed off in the last hundred yards. One of their oarsmen collapsed, his oar sliding from the oarlock and drifting astern as his inert body fell forward breaking the rhythm of the man ahead of him.

What happened from then on I have no way of knowing. I did not hear the hoarse blast of the *Cherokee's* fog-whistle near us. I did not remember passing under her stern. I did not hear Joe commend us to "toss oars" in token of our hard-fought victory. I must have pulled those last hundred yards in a sort of epileptic daze.

What I do remember, however, was finding myself on the bottom boards of the surfboat with Ensign Fleming alongside me and Kane dousing us both with cupped handfuls of salt water.

Surfboat Joe was floundering around in the sea, having met

that fate reserved for all winning Coast Guard race-boat coxswains.

"Haul me aboard, Red," Joe implored Kane. "I ain't no fish, an' I was never much of a swimmer."

"We'll be with you in a minute," said Kane. "A good dip will cool us all off. Come on, boys!" he yelled, and plunged over the side.

I let myself topple over, too, finding relief from my aching muscles in the tepid waters of the Gulf Stream. The salinity, however, stung my raw seat viciously, also my blistered hands. Gently floating about I awaited the *Mohican* to move up near us and pick up our boat. Although an iceberg floated in crystalline majesty not far away, the temperature of the warm Gulf Stream as it flows by the south of Newfoundland runs as high as 72 degrees Fahr. during the warmer months of June and July. Hundreds of miles from land, chaperoned by a lofty pillar of ice, we splashed about happily.

Our approaching cutter congratulated us with a screeching serenade of whistles and hootings. Our victorious surfboat was drawn up, and as we stepped on to the deck loud cheers welcomed us.

"Well done, boys—well done!" Captain Clark commended us. "You're the best boat's-crew I've ever had under me."

And so as champions of the International Ice Patrol we displayed a broom from the truck of the *Mohican's* lofty mainmast emblematic of our victory and symbolic of our sweeping all competition from the seas.

When the cutter turned her bow towards Halifax, aching joints and protesting muscles were forgotten. We looked forward to celebrating our triumph in appropriate sailor style.

Sticks' Place was closed when we descended on it for that purpose. It had been raided while we were out on patrol. Nova Scotia, like the United States, was possessed of a dry madness in 1922, and Halifax had its share of the shouting cohorts espousing the gloomy cause of aridity.

"I'll be open in a week or so," the one-legged proprietor confided to us. "Give things time to blow over a bit. I was

fool enough to sell some young punk from Dalhousie University a pint of rum. He got stewed with a crowd of other college nitwits, got pinched and squealed on me. The university authorities ordered the coppers to jump on me. Them college punks make me puke. Give me sailors any time!"

The news was a blow to our expectations, but we foraged undauntedly. We visited one Dr McPherson, a broken-down medical man whose practice was reduced to writing prescriptions for liquor on a Nova Scotian Government-owned liquor store, which he would do for the sum of one dollar.

Dr McPherson made no pretence about himself. Diagnosis and treatment were summary and rapid. He occupied a dingy old office in Hollis Street, and the only suggestion of his dishonoured profession was the chart on the wall which portrayed the ravaging effects of alcohol on the human system in a variety of garish hues. From a caption on the bottom of the chart we gathered it had been given to the doctor by the Anti-saloon League of America. One desk and one chair were the furnishings of that physician's office. McPherson's flabby bulk rested on the chair; his flat feet rested on the desk beside his prescription pad. His patients were almost in entirety made up of seafaring men and soldiers from the Halifax garrisons.

"You boys look sick," announced the doctor when Kane, Nelander, Donovan, and myself crowded into his office. "Colds, I presume?"

Nelander rasped hollowly. "Yeah—'s' terrible!"

"Name?" asked the doctor, reaching for his pad.

"David Copperfield," said Nelander, coughing again. "Don't you want me to tell you about this cold? It's right here in my chest, and——"

"One dollar, please," said McPherson, handing over the prescription with one hand and reaching for the dollar with the other. "Next patient!"

"Me," said Kane. "I got a bad corn."

"This'll fix you up," said McPherson. "One dollar, please!"

Donovan confessed to a bad case of dandruff, and I surmised from my symptoms I was down with halitosis.

"One dollar, please," said Dr McPherson, writing prescriptions.

Thus fortified against disease we went to call on Eskimo Marie. She was not at home.

"She's gone to Montreal for a week to see her father," the landlady told us. "She left the day after Sticks' Place got closed. But I expect her back any day now."

"Well," said Kane dourly, disappointed, "I'm glad she didn't go north to see her mother."

Marie's father, we knew, was a retired sergeant of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, of whom she seldom spoke, now living on his pension in Montreal. Her mother had been a full-blooded Eskimo native of bleak, icebound Ellesmere Land, whose only white inhabitants were members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police outposts and occasional fur trappers. There it was under the cold Northern lights that a bored policeman sought romance with a complaisant native resulting in the illegitimate Marie.

At a loose end with Marie out of town we decided to call on Preacher Mason at the hospital. We found him out in the grounds of the institution taking in the bright sunshine of early July. He was sitting in a Bath chair, but was able to get around with crutches. With him he had the old man who ran the Seamen's Mission in Water Street, a crony of his.

"How's tricks, Preacher?" Kane boomed. "Hear about us winnin' the championship of the International Ice Patrol by beatin' the pants off the *Cherokee's* crowd?"

"I'm getting along fine," smiled the convalescent. "Yes," he admitted, "I did hear about the boat race and was glad to learn the *Mobican* won. I'm glad to see you boys again, too."

"Think you'll be ready to shove off with us when we sail for the States?" Kane asked. "We're goin' to base at a port called Wilmington, down in North Carolina. You live somewhere thereabouts, don't you?"

"Morehead City is not very far from Wilmington—a little over a hundred miles," said Mason. "Yes, it's my home town.

I used to run a fishing-boat out of there before—well, before.” He finished quiet and abruptly.

“I don’t suppose you’ll be any too keen on goin’ back to those parts,” surmised Kane sympathetically, aware of Mason’s reason for not dwelling on his past life. He changed the subject. “By the way, I guess you know about Marie bein’ out of town?”

Mason’s eyes turned away. “Yes,” he murmured. “She told me she was going to Montreal for a few days. She came up to see me before she left. I got a line from her in Montreal. She’ll be back by Saturday.”

Kane’s amusement rumbled in his deep chest. “Mustn’t feel so bad about her, Preacher. I told you right along you was just wastin’ your time tryin’ to make a Salvation Army jane of her.”

Mason made no answer.

“How’d you like to go on a picnic with us next Sunday, Preacher?” I asked hastily, steering the talk away from Kane’s second unfortunate selection of a topic for discussion. “Perhaps we can borrow one of the surfboats and sail it down to the Northwest Arm and bring along a nice lunch. Marie will be back by that time and we’ll take her, too. I guess you boys can dig up skirts for yourselves if you want to.”

To my surprise Mason accepted the invitation readily. He asked a favour.

“Do you mind if the Reverend Bailey accompanies us?”

“No, of course not,” I said uncertainly.

On the way back to the waterfront Kane snorted, “Have you gone out of your bloody mind? A picnic is crazy enough, but to haul two bible-thumpers along! Why didn’t you ask the choir, too, and carry the organ? What sort of a picnic will this be?” I did not answer. “Marie’ll be bored stiff as hell! Bet she won’t even go when she hears about it.”

“Sometimes picnics are pleasant,” I said feebly. “Anyway, I didn’t think he’d accept.”

Still in an expansively benevolent frame of mind over our victory against the *Cherokee* in the Ice Patrol surfboat race, Captain Clark made no difficulty about us using one of the cutter’s surfboats for a sailing party.

"However, don't take any civilians along with you in the boat," he warned. "That would be a violation of our regulations."

We promised.

"What about Marie and that old skypilot bloke?" Kane wanted to know when we left the captain's presence. "They're civilians."

"We can say we rescued them from a small boat that was leaking out in the harbour," I replied, with unusual inspiration.

Marie, much to Kane's surprise, was enthusiastic about the forthcoming picnic when the invitation was tendered her upon her return from Montreal.

"Where are we goin' to-night?" Kane asked her.

"Can't see you to-night," she replied somewhat nervously. "I've got something to do. Now about this picnic," she said quickly, "where shall I meet you two boys to-morrow morning?"

"At the foot of Salter Street at the wharf," said Kane, looking at her curiously.

"That'll be nice," she said, uncomfortable before his scrutiny. "I'll take a few fancy eats along, too."

The *Mohican's* commissary steward provided us with a choice lunch, and the next morning Preacher Mason, Kane, and I stepped the mast in the surfboat, hoisted sail, and with a fair wind astern headed down towards the dock where we were to pick up Eskimo Marie and the Rev. Bailey.

An hour later we were tacking up the stretch of water known as the North-west Arm between beautifully wooded slopes slipping right down to the water's edge. The banks of the Arm were thronged with other picnickers out to enjoy the serene summer's day. Dotting the waters of the Arm itself were sailing yachts, motor-boats, and rowing crews practising in their long, fragile shells.

Marie and the Rev. Bailey and Mason were sitting on the thwarts of the surfboat enjoying the day and its sights. Kane handled the tiller while I did duty by the sheet ropes.

Kane selected a grassy spot which ran right down to the water as a mooring-place for the boat, and, manœuvring smartly

in, we lowered the mainsail and jib, making fast the painter to a lofty maple-tree. Mason, because his ankle was still in a cast, was carried ashore by my Herculean friend, while I waded through the few inches of water with Marie in my arms.

Kane and I had brought our bathing-suits. When he suggested a swim I eagerly concurred.

"We can change back in that thick patch of woods."

"Don't make love to Marie," Kane grinned at Preacher Mason, "or I'll throw you overboard, bum leg an' all!" There was no answering smile on Mason's face.

"You know, Paul," Kane remarked, after we had swum out some hundred yards and stopped to tread water. "I think Preacher's goin' nuts about Marie. I'll have to have a heart-to-heart talk with that lad before things go too far——"

"He's harmless," I said. "You know what these Holy Joes are like."

Marie had laid out a lunch for us on a clean white table-cloth loaded with a variety of sandwiches, pies, cakes, and fruit which awaited our return.

"I can eat a dead horse," said Kane, with inelegant but picturesque emphasis, "I'm that hungry!"

Stammered the mild-mannered, timid Rev. Bailey, "I'd suggest we say grace before partaking of this food—if—" with a dubious but pleading glance at Kane "—if you don't mind. Do you?"

"It's okay with me," said Kane. "But don't ask me to say it. I've forgotten how."

"Thank you, thank you," murmured the Rev. Bailey gratefully. "Marie," he requested, "will you please say grace for us?"

A wide grin spread over Kane's rugged face.

"Dear Lord," began Marie quietly, "we thank Thee for what we are about to partake of Thy generous bounty——"

Kane's grin faded.

"Er—let's tear into the sandwiches," I said hurriedly at the conclusion of the grace which had left the air pregnant with a certain electrical atmosphere.

But nobody ate.

"Ginger," said Preacher Mason slowly, "I hope you won't feel badly about it or me—but—or think that I have been treacherous to you in any way," added the speaker with a quickening pace, "for I haven't. It's just one of those things that comes about because it is meant to be, I suppose——"

Kane was no dullard by any means.

"It won't be news to me if you two are thinkin' of gettin' married," he said. "Well, when's it comin' off?"

"It came off last night," Marie put in quietly.

"I married them in my little chapel down on Water Street," said the Rev. Bailey.

"Ginger——" Marie looked at him timidly from the corner of her eyes. "Are—aren't you goin' to wish us luck?"

Kane's contagious grin appeared again.

"Sure I am!" he bellowed. "An' I tell you, Preacher," he confided in loud sincerity, "you're gettin' the best wife a deck swab can ever hope to get. I know!"

The picnic ended early on a somewhat flat note.

Kane and I gravitated by customary magnetic impulse to Sticks' Place. He had not reopened yet, but at our request for some liquid refreshment invited us into his own quarters.

Kane poured out a liberal drink for each of us.

"Well," he said, a little glumly, "it's a great life!"

We drank to it.

"Yes," said Kane, immediately refilling our deep glasses with a generous quantity of the black Jamaica rum, and speaking with a perceptible increase of optimism. "It sure is!"

We drank to it.

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